The Carthaginians 6th–2nd Century BC

ANDREA SALIMBETI & RAFFAELE D'AMATO

ILLUSTRATED BY GIUSEPPE RAVA

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Series editor Martin Windrow

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THE CARTHAGINIANS 6th–2nd CENTURIES BC

INTRODUCTION

Terracotta male head from Carthage, 6th century BC. This realistic portrait image of a Carthaginian nobleman or *shophet* still shows traces of colour on its surface, e.g. blue on the cap and beard and red on the brow and cheek. Note the typical nose-ring or *nezem*, and also the strikingly rendered almond-shaped eyes. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

Carthage was the greatest military power in the western Mediterranean world during the centuries of the Greek and Roman expansions, and used its mighty fleet to build a commercial and territorial empire in North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula and the central and western Mediterranean islands. The study of the armament and military culture of these formidable Western Phoenicians – *Chanani* (*Kn'nm*, from Canaanites, as they called themselves), or Punics (from the Latin *Poeni*, i.e. Phoenicians) – is still ongoing; but some attempt at an analysis is essential for any understanding of the history of their conflicts with the Greek potentates of the central and western Mediterranean and later with the Roman *Res Publica*. This book tries to represent how Carthaginian warriors might have looked, according to the current state of our knowledge based on a comparative synthesis of the main archaeological finds and the iconographic and literary sources.

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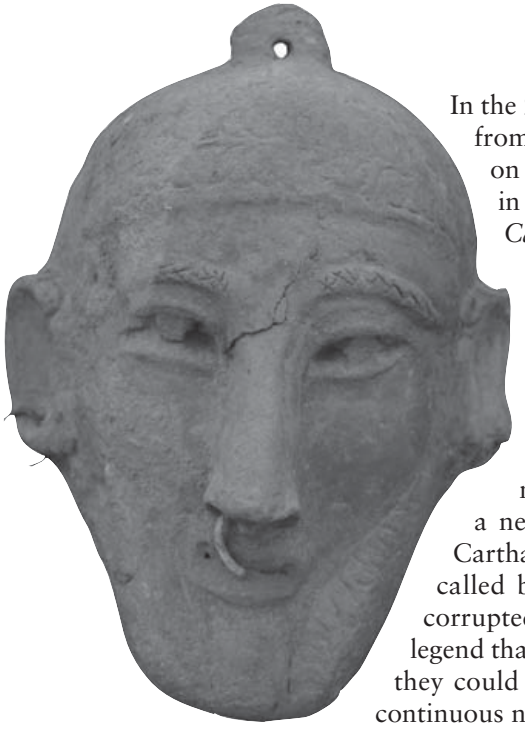

In the 9th century BC, Phoenician refugees from Tyre, escaping from the threat posed by the Assyrians to their east, founded on the coast of what is now Tunisia a 'New City' – *Qrt hdst* in the Phoenician language, *Karchedon* to the Greeks and *Carthago* to the Romans. This Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean was essentially provoked by economic competition. Confronted by both the Assyrians from the east and the Greeks from the north-west, the Tyrians decided to found colonies far to the west, of which Carthage became the largest. Following the Phoenician tradition, it was a mercantile city whose affairs centred on maritime trade, but which made war when this was considered necessary to defend a new enclave or to open new markets. The acropolis of Carthage, traditionally built by the mythical queen Dido, was called by the Semitic name of *Bozra* ('citadel'), but this was corrupted by Greeks into *Byrsa*, ('bull's hide'). Hence arose the legend that when the settlers were each allowed as much ground as they could 'cover with a hide', they ingeniously cut a hide into a continuous narrow strip to surround as much land as possible.

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During the 8th century Phoenicia itself was overrun by the Assyrians, and Carthage assumed the role of protector over the other western settlements, while her own colonies also proliferated. There was thus increasing competition with Greek colonies in the same regions (North Africa, Iberia, Sicily and other Mediterranean islands). The first real expansion of Carthage from a city-state into an empire very likely occurred in the middle of the 6th century BC. At that period historical sources refer to military expeditions by the Carthaginian general Mazheus to Sicily and Sardinia (545–535 BC), when he gained control of Phoenician colonies already established on those islands. (This rendering of his name was changed to 'Malchus' by a 17th-century editor who recognized the Punic word *Mlk* in the text.) There is also mention of the unsuccessful sea battle of Alalia (535 BC), fought off Corsica by Carthaginians in alliance with Etruscans against Greeks. At the end of the 6th century Carthage already controlled the North African shores from the Atlantic coast of today's Morocco to the western borders of Egypt, plus Malta, the western part of Sicily, Sardinia and the Balearic Islands. Multi-ethnicity was an essential component of Carthaginian policy; over centuries, the elite contracted marriages with foreigners in order to reinforce relations with subject or allied peoples by means of kinship (the renowned Hannibal Barca himself married an Iberian princess).

Bronze helmet from Sulcis, Sardinia, 6th century BC. This proto-Corinthian helmet, 31cm (12.2in) high, is typical of the kind of equipment adopted by the Carthaginians through commercial and military contacts with the dispersed colonies of 'Greater Greece' *(Magna Graecia)* in Sicily and the western Mediterranean area. (Photo courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

During the 5th century Carthage's major rivals were the Greek rulers of Syracuse, who drove Punic expeditionary forces out of Sicily for decades after 480 BC. However, Sardinia became one of Carthage's most productive and valuable possessions in this period, and the agricultural exploitation of that island was particularly intensive. On the eve of the battle of Himera in 480 BC the Punic general Hamilcar the Magonid, leader of an expedition to Sicily, sent part of his fleet to Sardinia to procure wheat. In 396 BC Himilco, a grandson of Hamilcar who was then besieging Syracuse during the renewed Sicilian wars, sent ships to both Libya and Sardinia to stock up on food, particularly wheat. When military expeditions failed and the Libyans revolted in North Africa, Carthage owed its salvation to the

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Punic coin of 220–215 BC from Cartagena *(Carthago Nova)* in Spain, with a clear image of a Thracian-type helmet. Several styles of Hellenistic helmets of the period are visible on Carthaginian coins and monuments, attesting to a marked process of Hellenization within Carthaginian material culture during the 3rd century. (Author's collection)

continued ability to import grain from Sardinia. Later, even after the treaty that ended the expeditions of Agathocles of Syracuse (310–306 BC), it is said that he was planning to cut the Carthaginian grain supply from Sardinia.

From 430 BC Pericles of Athens and, a century later, Alexander the Great of Macedonia considered expeditions against Carthage to enhance the spread of Greek commerce in the Mediterranean; but after the removal of the danger represented by Agathocles in 307 BC, the Punic state entered one of its most glorious periods. Master of the seas, it controlled the passage between the western and eastern halves of the Mediterranean. Carthage consolidated once again its ancient links with the Phoenician motherland, which under the Sidonian dynasties entered a new period of prosperity. In about 300 BC even Ptolemy of Egypt recognized this predominance, adopting the symbol of the Phoenician horse on his coinage, and renewing alliances with Carthage and its Levantine sisters. Carthage was now firmly attached to the main cultural centres of the Hellenic world - Alexandria and Tarento – and began a marked process of Hellenization, with a philo-Hellenic aristocracy holding power within the state. In the early 3rd century BC Carthage's colonies around the Mediterranean assured it of an enviable prosperity, especially thanks to its commercial and military fleet, called the 'silver fleet'.

The three Punic Wars

The Greek legacy of war against Carthage now passed to Rome, which challenged this rival for power over the western Mediterranean in three ferocious wars during a total of 120 years. After Carthaginian defeat at the sea battle of the Aegadian Islands brought to an end the First Punic War (264–241 BC), which had been fought for control of Sicily, the Punics swore to the peace treaty in the name of Jupiter Lybicus, the Romans on Jupiter Capitolinus. In front of the temple of Jupiter in Rome the cut-off beaks *(rostra)* of captured Carthaginian ships were installed as war trophies (Silius Italicus, I, 623), and as an ever-present reminder of unfinished business.

A

EARLY CARTHAGINIANS, 6th CENTURY BC

1: Carthaginian war-chariot and crew; Sardinia, c.550 BC

While Carthaginian armies came under Greek influence from the beginning, they did not forget the military traditions of their Phoenician ancestors, including the use of cavalry and also of chariots. These probably followed Near Eastern designs, like those found at Salamina in Cyprus. The leather-covered body was constructed on a wooden framework supporting panels of woven osiers, with a central partition ending in a looped handgrip at the rear. The crew was composed of two or three warriors, in the latter case an armoured hoplite **(1a),** the driver **(1b)** and a crew leader armed with a bow **(1c);** in action the bowman stood at the rear behind the driver and the hoplite holding the handgrip, which could also serve as a shield support. The chariot had two draught-poles. The wheels had eight or ten spokes strengthened by iron nails driven through the rim, and were secured to the axle with large decorated cotter pins at the hubs; blades could also be attached here. Sometimes horse-armour was also provided for the team, with oxhide aprons, metal frontlets and crests, metal breastplates and side pendants decorated with religious motifs; trappings were of gilt metal or leather ornamented with gold. The driver's helmet is of Phoenician typology; the archer is a nobleman, wearing the Cypriot-style masked helmet visible on a Sardinian seal, and Cypriot-style armour of metal plates covered with leather. The main equipment of the heavily armoured hoplite is taken from that found on the Sulcis peninsula, of Hellenic style but personalized according to Punic taste. Silver bracelets, torques and other ornaments were also recovered from 6th-century warrior graves in Sardinia.

2 & 3: Sardian Iolei warriors

The Sardian warriors are reconstructed from the military gear worn by the remarkable stone 'giants' found at Monte Prama and recently restored. Their equipment is still that of the late Bronze Age, as worn by their ancestors the Sea Peoples, Shardana and Achaeans. Note the leather protection combined with bronze and iron elements.

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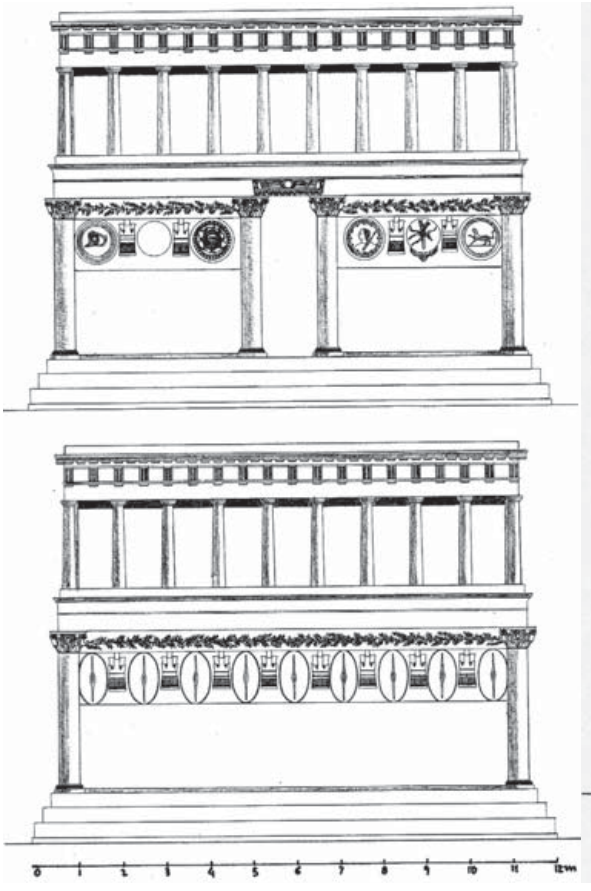
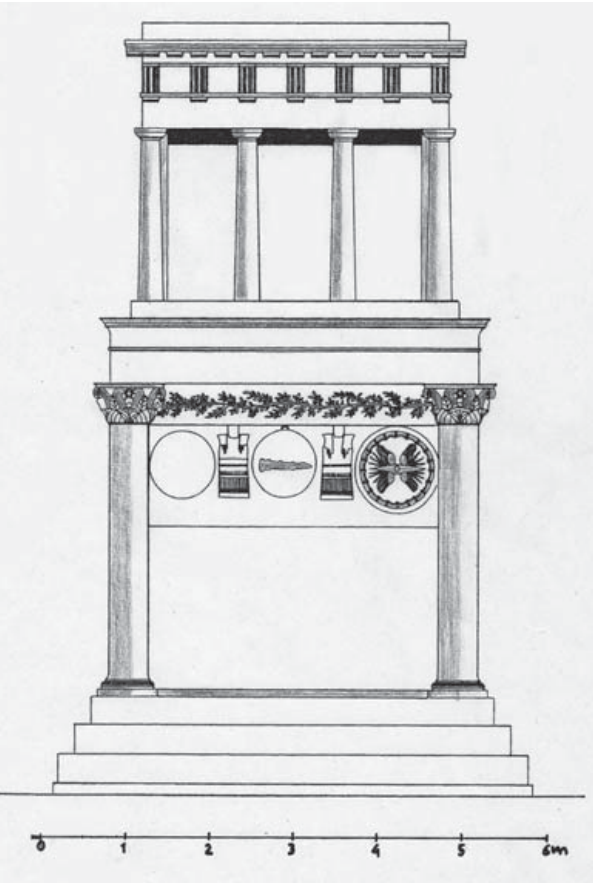


East (top) and west sides of the monument at Simitthus/ Chemtou. The most recent scholarly interpretation is that this was erected *c.*139 BC for Micipsa, king of Maesulian Numidia, and that the shields and armour represented on the frieze were copied from those captured at Zama from Hannibal's army in the time of the king's forefather Massinissa. Both round and ribbed-oval shield types are depicted. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Rakob)



Larger-scale drawing of the south face of the Simitthus/ Chemtou monument. The sculpted frieze shows round *clipeus* shields, alternating with examples of the linen cuirass *(linothorax)* displayed as if hung from pegs. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Rakob)

During the conflict a Carthaginian leader had emerged as a brilliant organizer of guerrilla warfare against the Romans: Hamilcar (Abdmilqart, 'the favourite of' or 'servant of' Melqart), of a family clan named the Barca (in the Punic language *hbrq*, 'the lightning'). The Barcids were one of the leading families of Carthage, traditionally claiming their descent from an ancient king of Sidon who had escaped from the Phoenician coast to follow the mythical Dido to North Africa (SI, I, 70–76). Returning to Carthage, in 240 BC Hamilcar became involved in another fierce conflict, against an army of mutinous mercenaries. Hamilcar defeated them at Utica and Tunis; but meanwhile the mercenary garrisons in Sardinia had also rebelled, killing the generals Bostar and Hannon, and spreading terror among the Carthaginians on the island. The Sardinians rose against the mutineers and forced them to flee to Italy; there the mercenaries asked for help from Rome, which took the opportunity to intervene in 238 BC. The following year the Carthaginians lost their rich provinces of Sardinia and Corsica to Rome; an attempt to organize an expedition to retake them failed, and Carthage even had to pay an indemnity of 1,200 talents. Thus Sardinia and Corsica became, after Sicily, the first Roman provinces truly overseas, and Carthage emerged from this 'mercenary war' even more greatly weakened.

Hamilcar Barca was appointed commander-in-chief of the Punic army, and to offset the loss of Sicily and Sardinia he used existing Carthaginian footholds in southern Spain to begin a conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, from which he hoped to launch a counter-offensive against Rome.

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The see-sawing course of the long Second Punic War (218–201 BC), Rome's resilience in the face of disastrous defeats, and the deeds of Hamilcar's sons Hannibal ('Baal gracious to me') and Hasdrubal (Azrubâal) Barca in Spain and Italy, are too well chronicled elsewhere to repeat here. After the decisive victory of Scipio Africanus at Zama south of Carthage in 202 BC forced the city to accept humiliating peace terms, Carthage was a pale ghost of its former self; but this was not enough for a powerful war-faction among the Romans, who argued for its final destruction. Conflict between Carthage and Numidia provided the excuse for the Third Punic War in 149 BC, and in 146 BC a Roman army utterly destroyed the city and its people, annihilating forever one of the most famous and successful civilizations in Western history (Velleius Paterculus, I, 12).

HISTORICAL REPUTATION

'The Carthaginians are cruel', commented Silius Italicus. Coming immediately after mention of the fate that they suffered at Roman hands in 146 BC, that charge may seem hypocritical, but it is certainly true that Carthage condemned captured enemy leaders to atrocious executions. The Iberian prince Tagus was crucified by Hasdrubal (SI, I, 151ff), and the Roman general Atilius Regulus was thrust into a barrel lined with iron spikes and rolled down the streets of Carthage. Silius Italicus has left us (I, 170ff) an unsparing description of the tortures inflicted by the Carthaginians to punish the Iberian avenger of Tagus, who had assassinated Hasdrubal with the late prince's favourite sword: fire and red-hot steel, and scourges that cut the body to ribbons. In fact we have no direct knowledge of the Punic code of ethics, only the negative judgements of Greek and Roman writers, who were influenced both by political hostility and by the fact that they mainly came into contact with only the most unscrupulous elements of Carthaginian society – mercenaries commanded by ruthlessly competitive generals.

However, it is perhaps arguable that the Carthaginians showed even less respect for human life than was the norm among the Greeks and the Romans of the Consular Age, low though that sets the bar. This is evident from the cruelties inflicted by the city's senate not only on individuals of low rank but also on members of the elite, as a matter of state policy. Accounts of the First Punic War show that the 'Council of the Hundred and Four' showed no mercy to their own generals when these were unsuccessful. Hanno, the commander of the garrison of Messana (today's Messina), was crucified for having surrendered to the Romans; another commander of the same name was lucky, after suffering two defeats, to be punished only by a fine of 6,000 gold pieces. In 253 BC, after the defeat of Regulus, the Council still crucified the commander who failed to recapture Panormus (today, Palermo); and in 241 BC an

3rd-century statuette of a priest, found in the Punic necropolis at Puig des Molins on the island of Ibiza. Note the plumed headgear, typical of the Levant, and the earrings; according to the *Poenulus* of Plautus, the latter were a characteristic adornment of Punic men. The figure wears a neck pendant in the shape of a reversed out-turned crescent, or horns, above a sun disc. (National Archaeological Museum, Madrid; photo courtesy Luis-Garcia Zaqarbal)

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admiral also named Hanno was crucified after he was defeated at the battle of the Aegadian Islands. The Romans believed that the Punic government's extreme harshness towards its own commanders was one of the causes of Carthage's defeat.

It might be argued that a contempt for human life was not surprising among a people for whom the ultimate meritorious act was ritual suicide (one is inescapably reminded of the Japanese cult of *bushido* as still practised in the 1930s–40s). The Phoenicians also shared the ancient belief in the value of sacrifices to propitiate their gods. When they were threatened by Agathocles of Syracuse at the end of the 4th century BC, the Carthaginians blamed their misfortune on negligence of their religious observances, and reportedly sacrificed 500 children taken from the noblest families. (We are told that the richest families actually bred and educated slave children to substitute for their own sons in such extreme situations.) Notoriously, the Phoenicians are alleged to have sacrificed young children by burning them alive, but to what degree this took place is still a subject of dispute among scholars. Phoenician-Punic sacred places are called by the biblical word *tophet*, and there is plentiful archaeological evidence for cremations of children at such sites in North Africa, Sicily and Sardinia; but whether these were actual burnt sacrifices or the cremated remains of natural deaths (perhaps stillbirths) is unconfirmed.

It seems probable that children were sacrificed in early times, but that later the sacrifice of an animal was normally substituted, and only when a terrible crisis threatened the city were living infants sometimes given to the holy fires in front of the altar of Baal Moloch or inside his monstrous oven-statue; this happened in 238 BC, during the revolt of the mercenaries. Stelae were erected in honour of sacrificial victims, but their exact interpretation is still disputed (a *stele* is a monumental or grave stone; pl., *stelae*). Ruins and archaeological excavations of the Punic civilization speak of a prosperous and vigorous city culture. It is hard to reconcile this positive picture with the hideous idea of child-sacrifice by fire, but not impossible: the mentality and moral codes of ancient peoples were completely different from our own.

B

FIRST BATTLE OF HIMERA, 480 BC

1: Sardinian Phoenician marine

This figure is reconstructed from a contemporary jewel made in Sardinia. His equipment is clearly of Greek typology, with the Corinthian helmet from St Antioco (Sardinia) surmounted by a metal crest, composite armour in Greek-Cypriot style, and greaves. The extraordinary shield is the mask of Pan or of a satyr; while its heart shape is unusual, it was practical for a warrior throwing javelins. Note his heavy single-edged *kopis* sword, of Near Eastern origin.

2: Hamilcar the Magonid

This general's defeat at Himera, at the hands of Gelon of Syracuse and Theron of Akragas (today, Agrigento), ended not only Carthage's attempt to restore a deposed tyrant of Himera, but also Punic power in Sicily for some 70 years thereafter. According to the ancient writers, he was officiating at a ceremony of sacrifice when the fatal Greek attack struck (thus the bloodstains on his garment, and the fire on the altar behind him). He is dressed in the rich costume of a Punic dignitary: white linen with a partial 'kilt' and a cap, decorated with the rich embroidery and jewels befitting his rank of *shophet*. His physical appearance would have recalled ancient Semitic traditions, e.g. with his hair soaked with myrrh, and the curled beard styled with unguents. Such details are attested by Punic terracotta portraits; some of these also suggest that persons of the purest Semitic blood retained Near Eastern physical features, such as slightly almond-shaped eyes, which differentiated them from the mass of the mixed Libyan-Punic population.

3: Carthaginian 'Greek' hoplite

Also wielding a *kopis*, this heavy infantryman is reconstructed from a Sicilian statuette representing a Carthaginian warrior. The cuirass is a Greek *omphalatos* (Pollux, *Onomasticon*, I, 135), of leather or other organic material fitted with round metallic bosses. We do not know the exact composition of the fabric of these armours (leather, multi-layered linen, or felt?), but the Carthaginians certainly used them, and consequently they became introduced to the Italic islands (Pausanias, VI, 19, 7).

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CHRONOLOGY (all dates BC)

Note: Attention to the chronology is advised in order to avoid confusion, owing to the repeated use of a few Carthaginian personal names – e.g. Hamilcar, Hasdrubal, Hannibal, Hanno, etc – and repeated battles at or near the same sites, e.g. Himera and Akragas in Sicily.

814 Traditional date for foundation of Carthage by Queen Elissa Dido at the head of refugees from Tyre.

***c.*600** The Carthaginian expansion in Sicily begins, bringing confrontation with the *Italiotes* (Greek colonists in southern Italy).

6th century BC:

***c.*545–535** Carthaginian operations on Sardinia led by General Mazheus end in his defeat.

535 A Punic-Etruscan allied fleet of 120 ships is defeated by the Phocean Greeks near Alalia (today, Aleria), Corsica.

509 First agreement between Rome and Carthage, over geographical limits of each's trading activities.

5th century BC:

481 War breaks out between Syracusan Greeks and Carthage.

480 Syracusan Greeks under tyrant Gelon defeat Carthaginian army of Hamilcar the Magonid at battle of Himera in Sicily; Carthaginian army withdraws from the island.

480–410 Carthaginian naval expansions westwards, including planting outposts beyond the Straits of Gibraltar.

409–400 Renewed invasion of Sicily under Magonid descendants Himilco and Hannibal brings many victories, including second battle of Himera (409), and Akragas (406).

Golden ring from Tharros, Sardinia, 7th–6th century BC. It shows a remarkable helmet, combining the embossing and diadem typical of the Near Eastern region with the contemporary Cypriot tradition of masked helmets. Note the careful depiction of a beard. (Photo courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

4th century BC:

398–397 Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, captures island-fortress of Motya, north-west Sicily; Carthaginian army under Himilco besieges Syracuse, but is repulsed with heavy losses.

392 New peace negotiated between Carthaginians and Syracusans; in succeeding years the latter reduce Carthaginian territory to enclaves in western Sicily.

385–376 Carthaginians again expand eastwards in Sicily.

348 Renewal of Carthaginian-Roman trading agreement.

341 Carthaginians nearly capture Syracuse, but, under command of Corinthian mercenary general Timoleon, Syracusans drive back and destroy Carthaginian army at battle of Crimissus (Krimisos) river; reportedly 10,000 Carthaginians are killed, including entire Sacred Band.

323–312 Disunity among Syracusans allows renewed Carthaginian expansion in Sicily.

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311–306 War with Agathocles, Tyrant of Syracuse. Carthaginian general Hamilcar defeats Agathocles at third battle of Himera (311) and besieges Syracuse; but Agathocles then lands in North Africa, defeats a Carthaginian army under Hanno (310), and besieges the city (310–307). Eventual Carthaginian victory forces Agathocles to withdraw to Sicily, though not under ruinous peace terms (306). Simultaneously, Carthage renews its trading agreement with Rome.

3rd century BC:

278–276 Syracuse makes alliance with Pyrrhus of Epirus, then master of southern Italy, but he is unable to defeat Carthaginians. Carthage concludes anti-Pyrrhus treaty with Rome (277).
(275 Pyrrhus decisively defeated by Romans at battle of Beneventum, Italy. By 265 Rome is unchallenged master of whole Italian peninsula.)

264–241 First Punic War:
This war between Rome and Carthage is fought, on land and sea, over control of Sicily. It begins when rival Sicilian local rulers each appeal for assistance; both powers send expeditionary forces.

262 Victory in battle at Akragas gains Rome control of most of Sicily.

256 Following Roman naval victory at Cape Ecnomus, Roman army under Regulus lands in North Africa. Carthage rejects peace terms demanded after Roman victory at Adys (today, Uthina).

255 Regulus is defeated and captured by Carthaginian army led by Spartan mercenary general Xanthippus; most of rescue fleet withdrawing Roman army is sunk by storm, with massive loss of life.

254 Carthaginians return to Sicily in strength, but military stalemate follows.

251 After defeat at Panormus (Palermo) by army under L. Caecilius Metellus, Carthaginians send Regulus to Rome under parole with offer of terms. (The traditional account is that he advised against agreement, but insisted on keeping his oath of parole and returning to Carthage, where he was tortured to death.)

249 Disastrous Roman naval defeat at Drepanum (Trapani). In Sicily, Hamilcar Barca successfully repulses Romans at Eryx.

247–242 Hamilcar Barca defeats repeated Roman attempts to retake Sicilian strongholds.

241 Roman naval victory at the Aegadian Islands; Carthaginians forced to evacuate most of Sicily and sue for peace; end of the First Punic War.

240–238 Hamilcar Barca crushes revolt of mercenaries at Carthage, but mutiny of Sardinia garrisons leads to loss of island to Rome.

237–229 Hamilcar begins conquest of the Iberian Peninsula from existing Punic settlements in Spain; by his death he has conquered most territory south of the Tagus and Ebro rivers.

228–221 Hamilcar's son-in-law Hasdrubal consolidates his Spanish conquests, and Rome recognizes Carthaginian sovereignty over submitted territory.

Bronze statuette of a Carthaginian warrior from Sicily, 5th century BC. This 12cm (4.72in) figure represents a hoplite heavy infantryman during the great wars against the Sicilian Greeks – see Plate B3. Note his linen or leather corselet reinforced with bronze bosses. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Alcaide 1999)

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221 Hasdrubal is assassinated, and succeeded by Hamilcar's son Hannibal Barca. Foundation of Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*, 'New Carthage').

219 In autumn, Hannibal finally captures unsubmitted port of Saguntum, an ally of Rome. (Since the end of the First Punic War, Rome has been preoccupied by wars in Illyria and by a Gallic invasion of central Italy.)

218–201 Second Punic War:

218 Leaving his brother Hasdrubal Barca (not to be confused with his late brother-in-law) with an army to defend Spain against Roman attacks, in the spring Hannibal leads his army north with an initial

4th or 3rd-century BC painting on pottery of an Oscan warrior from Campania, the region of western Italy around modern Capua. According to the ancient sources, such warriors were dissolute youths who were unable to follow a congenial career at home, where they would have had to deal with the Romans; they therefore sought employment abroad, enlisting as mercenaries in Carthaginian armies. (Archaeological Museum, Capua; author's photo)

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3rd-century BC barbed bronze arrowheads found in Carthage. Accounts of battles between the Punic armies and the Greeks and Romans only rarely mention bowmen, apart from those shooting from the backs of elephants. The site of the final destruction of Carthage in 146 BC has yielded huge numbers of arrowheads, but most are presumably from the victorious Roman army. (Photo courtesy Bardo Museum, Tunis)

strength of *c.*50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry and between 30 and 40 elephants. Crossing the Pyrenees Mountains (March–June), he profits from preparatory contacts and intelligence to pick up support in Gaul, and avoids interception by the army of Publius Scipio. He then crosses the Alps (October) and reaches the Po Valley in Cisalpine Gaul, though now weakened to perhaps 20,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and a few surviving elephants. Recruiting Italic allies locally, Hannibal defeats a Roman army in a mainly cavalry clash at the Ticinus river (November). At the Trebbia river (December), now with 30,000-plus men, he routs a stronger Roman army under T. Sempronius. Meanwhile, Roman expedition to Spain under Publius's brother Gnaeus Scipio captures territory north of the Ebro.

217 Hannibal brilliantly outmanoeuvres and outmarches (March–June) two Roman armies, led by consuls G. Flaminius and Gn. Servilius, to get south between them and Rome. At battle of Lake Trasimene (April) he destroys Flaminius's army in a huge ambush, and immediately afterwards that of Servilius. Rome appoints as dictator Q. Fabius '*Cunctator*' ('the Delayer'), who conducts an able campaign of denying Hannibal pitched battles while rebuilding Roman strength.

216, August

At Cannae on the Aufidus river Hannibal, with *c.*40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, faces 80,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry under the consuls C. Terentius Varro and L. Aemilius Paulus. He routs them in one of history's greatest exemplary tactical victories, killing perhaps as many as 70,000 Romans.

216–207 Stalemate in Italy; annual campaigns and counter-campaigns, indecisive victories and defeats on both sides. Rome raises large armies to campaign on several fronts, while Hannibal has difficulty recruiting; the Punic senate, dominated by his father's opponent Hanno, denies him the support he needs.

217–206 Other fronts:

The cooperating forces of brothers P. and Gn. Scipio campaign in Spain, gradually forcing Hasdrubal Barca back from the Ebro line, and eventually retaking Saguntum (212), but losing the captured territory again the following year. The Romans also foment an anti-Carthage revolt in North Africa by a Numidian king, but Hasdrubal returns and crushes this with help from Numidian prince Massinissa, whose valuable light cavalry accompany him back to Spain (212). Meanwhile (215), King Philip V of Macedonia opportunistically declares war against Rome (First Macedonian

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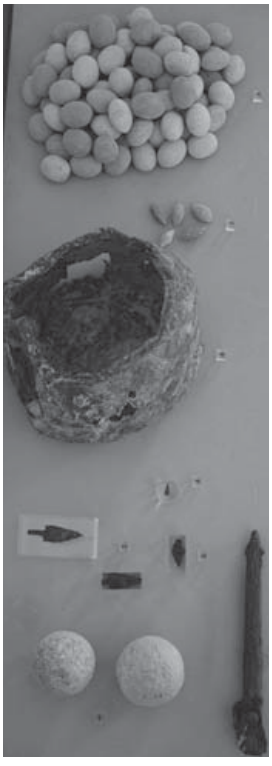

Artefacts from the siege and sacking of the city of Carthage, 149–146 BC. Many sling bullets have been found during excavations, and this pile of smooth stones represent the largest type; Diodorus Siculus writes that those used by the Balearic slingers weighed up to 1 *mina* – about 436g, or just under 1lb. At centre is a basket for munitions, woven from *sparto* vegetable fibre. Flanked by arrowheads and a fragment of what is probably a Roman *pilum* javelin are two smoothly worked limestone balls, presumably from catapults. Ranging in weight from 5–30kg (11–66lb), thousands of these have been found in Carthage. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

War), without much effect. Publius Scipio dies; his son P. Cornelius Scipio (the future *'Africanus'*) takes his place (210), and captures Cartagena (209). After Scipio defeats Hasdrubal Barca at Baecula (208), Hasdrubal takes reinforcements across the Alps (207) to cooperate with Hannibal in Italy. The remaining Carthaginians in Spain are finally defeated by Scipio in a decisive victory against great odds at Ilipa (206).

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207 Battle of the Metaurus river. Forced march by C. Claudius Nero allows link-up with army of M. Livius Salinator, and when battle is joined Nero's audacious left hook around the Carthaginian flank destroys Hasdrubal Barca's army; Hasdrubal is among the many thousands slain.

204–203 Landing in North Africa by P. Cornelius Scipio, who wins victories over Hannibal Barca's brothers and allies. Hannibal is recalled from Italy (203) with *c.*18,000 men, mostly veterans of the Italian campaign, and raises a new army around this core.

202 Battle of Zama (Naraggara): Hannibal, with *c.*45,000 foot, but only 3,000 horse and some elephants, is defeated with huge loss by Scipio's 34,000 infantry and 9,000 cavalry. Carthage sues for peace.

201 Under harsh terms of peace treaty Carthage is left with only its African possessions, loses its fleet and its elephants, and pays heavy annual tributes.

2nd century BC:

***c.*183** The exiled Hannibal, pursued by Rome, commits suicide.

149–146 Third Punic War:

147 P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, adopted grandson of Scipio Africanus, takes command of siege of Carthage.

146 Carthage is stormed, sacked and destroyed, the few surviving citizens being sold into slavery.

ORGANIZATION

Command

The leading class of Carthaginians, who traced their roots back to the Tyrian and Sidonian aristocracy, formed a small mercantile oligarchy, jealous of its privileges and riven by rivalries. Following the overthrow of its monarchy in the 5th century BC, Carthage was ruled by an aristocratic senate or council ('Council of the Hundred and Four'), presided over by two *shophet* (magistrates) who served similar functions to those of Roman consuls. Carthage's noble clans could afford, and were legally allowed, to maintain their own armies. There is also plentiful evidence for individuals from the leading families serving in command roles in the national military forces.

The different ranks of the Carthaginian army are little known, but they probably adopted Hellenic terminology. The Greek sources referred to the commander of Punic forces as *strategos* or *boetarch*. The latter was the title of a general commanding the troops of a garrison. The *strategos* could at the

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same time be a military governor, and had the authority to sign treaties. In areas of conflict we often find instances of dual command, and not all of these *strategoi* seem to be concerned with governing provinces.

Citizen militia

The Carthaginian troops, structured in the archaic period upon Eastern models such as the Assyrian armies, reshaped their organization to conform to Hellenic models during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. From the second half of the 4th century Carthage could field a citizen force of heavy infantry. According to Diodorus Siculus (XVI, 80), a part of it was organized in a 'Sacred Band' of 2,500 warriors recruited among the wealthy families. However, they could not stand up to most Greek hoplite infantry, and were sometimes wiped out in battles in Sicily. A band of young Carthaginian citizen warriors is mentioned by Silius Italicus in the army of Hannibal (III, 230ff). Some senators seem to have been included among those with the status of Carthaginian citizens who served in Hannibal's army, being mentioned in the treaty concluded with Philip V of Macedonia in 215 BC.

The mobilization of citizens (Punic, *b'lm* = 'the citizens') is attested as an institution not only in Carthage itself but also in the colonies. Panormus in Sicily minted silver coins to pay mercenary troops, but from 320 BC the Punic Sicilian tetradrachms had a design including mention of the *mmhnt* ('the citizens in the camp', i.e. the citizen militia serving alongside the mercenaries in the Carthaginian army). These coins bore on one side either the image of the goddess Core surrounded by dolphins or the head of Herakles-Melqart, and on the other side a horse's head and a palm tree. From 410 BC Carthage itself began to mint tetradrachms with the inscriptions *qrthdšt e* ('Carthage') and *mhnt* (the 'military camp', i.e. the military administration) to pay the mercenary troops employed in Sicily. The adoption on one side of the coin of bridled and free horses, both crowned by Nike as symbols of victory and military power, had strong propaganda value in a time of full-scale military operations against the Greeks.

Decorated bronze razors have been found at Carthaginian religious sites, presumably offered up as votive objects, and their iconography contains much information about the costume of Punic warriors. Under magnification, this 3rd-century BC example apparently shows an officer, his head covered with a lion-skin. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

Libyo-Phoenicians

The Libyo-Phoenicians or Punics were the national element, who lived in North Africa between the Atlantic coast of modern Morocco in the west and the Egyptian borderlands in the east, and also in the Spanish coastal regions between Cadiz and Almeria. The core of the army was always formed by them and, in some instances, by colonial or Levantine elements, whom the ancient authors generically call 'Phoenicians'. It is interesting to note, in the first phases of the Punic conquest of North Africa, the military 'contracts' mentioned by the ancient historians (Herodotus; Justinus, XIX, 2, 10). These included the forced regimentation of North Africans within Punic armies, under the command of Punic officers and subject to Punic law, and also presumably looser agreements with the semi-nomadic Libyan tribe of the Macae from Cirta (Constantine, in modern Algeria).

These Libyo-Phoenicians, as distinct from those of the capital, were recruited on a mercenary basis to remedy the deficiency in numbers of what we might term the 'metropolitan' citizenry, and their reluctance to serve on campaign. In the eyes of the elite of Carthage these provincials were citizens of the second rank, and their

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Campanian warrior, 4th–3rd century BC, from a tomb-painting. Note the *thyreos*-type shield with a central reinforcing rib; the Greek-style cuirass of layered linen *(linothorax)*; and the Attic-type helmet with double feather side-plumes *(geminae pinnae)*, associated with the war-god Mars. Among the mercenaries who were accustomed to fighting for both Greek and Punic employers in the Sicilian wars the Campanians had a reputation for being particularly unscrupulous, changing sides when it seemed likely to bring them better pay or better prospects of victory. (Archaeological Museum, Capua; author's photo)

paid participation in military service was also intended to improve their economic and social situation. The cities that furnished contingents are noted by Silius Italicus (III, 241ff) as Utica, Aspys, Berenicis, Barce, Cyrene (of Greek origin), Sabratha, Leptis (like Carthage, of Tyrian origin), Oea (today's Tripoli, whose contingents were a mixture of North Africans and Sicilians), Vaga, Hippo, Ruspina, Zama and Thapsus.

The Carthaginian national troops did not enjoy as good a reputation as their fleet. Although citizen-soldiers often showed courage and energy, the Carthaginian leaders preferred to entrust the defence of their strategic interests to professional soldiers.

MERCENARIES & ALLIES

Although the Carthaginian army was at first composed only of citizens of Phoenician origin, from the 6th century BC it saw increased recruitment of contingents of mercenaries and allies in order to realize the policy of imperial expansion. This use of mercenaries saved the metropolitan population from

C

HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS, *c.*400 BC

1: Carthaginian general

This reconstruction is copied largely from a seal ring found on the island of Ibiza. Some warriors added elements with religious or tribal significance to their costume and armour, to enhance the fearsome and impressive effect. Officers are remembered and represented with lion-skins worn over their helmets (SI, II, 156; III, 262); and a Libyan female leader is described with lion-skins wrapped around her body while fighting with bow and arrows from a chariot (SI, II, 166). This senior commander wears a leopard-skin over a Greek-Cypriot style of stiffened linen cuirass reinforced with metallic elements. According to Helbig, this armour, similar to that found in fragments in an ancient grave from Chiusi, was probably introduced to Italy by the Carthaginians. His 'Phrygian'-style helmet or cap is richly coloured; his clothing still shows strong influences from the Near East, with fitted trousers and a colourful tunic of Persian origin. Note that he carries a double-bladed axe.

2: Priest

This priest of Melqart, a Phoenician deity who became associated with the Greek god Herakles, is dressed according to the customs of his cult: a long, unbelted linen garment decorated with broad stripes and borders covers his limbs, above bare feet, and his shaven forehead is bound with a decorated headband of Pelusian flax (SI, III, 24ff).

3: *Shophet*

This Carthaginian magistrate wears the typical *lebbade* or high Phoenician cap, and is dressed in a short tunic with a kilt-like overgarment open at the front.

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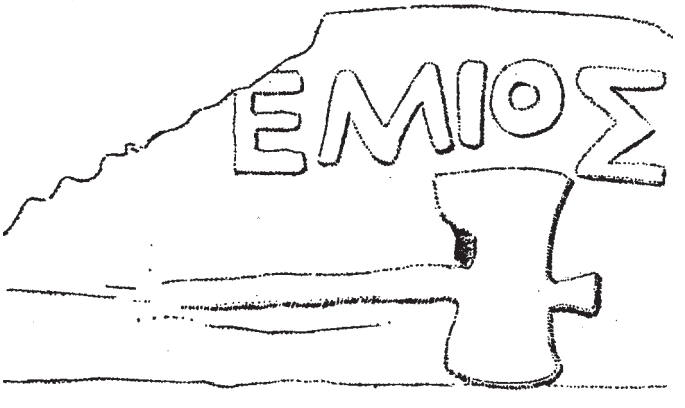
heavy casualties that were not easily replaceable, and it also reflected the Carthaginian concept of war, which was considered simply as an extension of business. When a war was necessary, it should be brief, so as not to divert too many resources from the main occupations of Punic citizens. This normally held true whatever the outcome of a particular campaign, thus the willingness of the government to discuss terms as soon as possible after an initial failure to achieve an objective. All in all, it was therefore natural to entrust these operations to professionals (as also, increasingly from the 4th century BC, did the Greeks).

This heavy reliance on mercenaries brought its own problems, the most serious of which was the question of command and control, since this policy might leave the city at the mercy of unscrupulous men. In some instances, those who were responsible for Carthage's defence seized the first opportunity to turn against the 'civilian bourgeoisie' that they hated. Carthage, whose great wealth was not equally spread among the population, was in more danger of civic unrest than other states, and mercenaries might ally themselves with a rebellious proletariat. To avoid such situations, the Punic government took the precaution of keeping the proletarian classes out of all positions of command. All the most important appointments were reserved for members of the aristocracy, and even the junior military cadres were recruited from among the mercenaries.

This system might have given good results if the Punic officers had had enough authority and prestige; but the mercenaries could feel little loyalty to the oligarchy of wealthy merchants who governed the city, and it was not easy to maintain discipline among them. One way to overcome the problem was to engage charismatic military leaders, but these men, almost exclusively of Greek nationality, might have political ambitions that were dangerous for the Punic state. Some of these 'Wallensteins' might well have conceived the idea of transforming Carthage into a kingdom for their own profit; so, indeed, might members of the oligarchy itself, such as the Barca family – thus the simmering mutual suspicion and disunity within the governing class, which weakened Carthage so dangerously at militarily critical moments.

With the enlargement of Punic economic interests the army became ever more exclusively mercenary, and progressively came to include almost all the peoples of the central and western Mediterranean area. The sources mention Moors (Mauri), Numidians and Africans; Pyrenean tribes and other Iberian allies; Sardinians, Corsicans and Balearics; Italic Celts, Ligurians, Etruscans, Campanians, Apulians, Lucanians, Bruttians, Sicels, Macedonians and Greeks. Elements of this heterogeneous mass preserved their regional characteristics and served under their own junior officers. Silius Italicus (*Punica*, I, 189ff; III, 231ff) offers a list of mercenary nationalities who were in Hannibal's army in Spain and followed him to Italy. Besides the Libyans who formed the core of the 'national army', there was a strong component of North African infantry (perhaps the majority), supported by Iberian light and heavy



Stamp from a 2nd-century Rhodian amphora from the El-Soumaa grave, showing a double-headed axe. This *bipennis* is mentioned by Silius Italicus as being used by the Libyan warriors of Hannibal's army at Saguntum; it is also visibly carried by many warriors represented on seals. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Rüger)

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infantry. The auxiliary troops consisted of the cavalry, especially the Numidian light horse, and the valuable Balearic slingers.

By that time, at the end of the 3rd century, these mercenaries were no longer simply troops hired for a single campaign and discharged after a few months' service, as had still sometimes been the case 50 years earlier during the First Punic War. They were a professional standing army seasoned by long years of warfare, under the command of skilled generals like Hamilcar Barca and his sons.

Clipeus shield from the Simitthus/Chemtou monument, *c.*139 BC, representing either a lioness or a griffin. (Photo courtesy Chemtou Archaeological Museum/ Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

Shield from Chemtou with the blazon of an 'apotropaic' eye, believed to ward off ill-fortune. (Photo courtesy Chemtou Archaeological Museum/ Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

North Africans

Among the North Africans were the subjected Libyans of the Marmarica, forming the light infantry: Garamantians, Nasamones, Macae from the Cynips river, the tribes of Barce, the Autololes, the ferocious Adyrmachidae, the inhabitants of greater Syrtis, and the Gaetulians (SI, II, 56–64). These peoples spoke Libyan and/or Egyptian (SI, II, 56). Sometimes their ranks even included women, true 'Amazons' fighting on chariots or horseback; they are described as protected by the crescent-shaped, red-painted *pelta*, which was sometimes jewelled (SI, II, 75ff; 167), and wielding the double axe (SI, II, 189). The image of Princess Asbyte fighting together with Hannibal at Saguntum is perhaps purely legendary, but even the Greek accounts remembered that the earliest Amazons came from Libya. Matriarchal warrior tribes and matrilineal tribal descent are a continuing theme in African history, and in some cases, as in Libya, this culture survived well into modern times. (It is also noteworthy that mosaics in African cities of the Imperial age often show fights between Amazons equipped with the *bipennis* axe and *pelta* shield, and other gladiators or beasts.)

Other African contingents were furnished by Ethiopians and Nubians, often used as elephant-riders; by the Marmaridae; and the Baniura, inhabitants of Mauretania Tingitana.

Iberians

In Spain the Phoenicians mixed, during centuries of presence and influence, with the indigenous Tartessio-Turdetan or Bastulo peoples, who were soon considered Carthaginian for all practical purposes. It was from Spain that Hannibal raised 12,000 men to form the nucleus of his phalanx, so decisive in the battle of Cannae, and Iberians provided the backbone of both Hamilcar's and Hannibal's troops (SI, I, 220ss). Contingents came from Celtic Asturias (SI, I, 252; III, 334), a land particularly famous for its mines and for the breeding of warhorses. Fast and tenacious, the Iberian horsemen were almost as lightly armoured as the Numidians and, as remembered by Livy, they were perfectly able to replace them in 'nuisance' and skirmish actions. According to the ancient authors, their rapidity was actually the characteristic that most distinguished the Iberian soldiers.

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LEFT Shield from the monument at Chemtou, representing a river and the Lernian Hydra from the Hercules legends; to the right of it is a linen cuirass. (Photo courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv);

RIGHT Shield from Chemtou representing a blazon of divine thunderbolts and wings. (Photo courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

Apart from the Asturians, other named peoples were the Cantabrians (Concani – descendants of Massagetae), Turdetani, Olcadi, Mastieni, Vascones (Basques), Turduli, Lusitani (Portuguese), Carpetani, Vaccaei and Arevaci (Celtiberians), Vettones, Arbacians, Galicians, Ilergetes, Ilercavones, Ceretani, Edetani, Sedetani, and obviously the Balearic slingers – the best in the ancient world. New and old Phoenician cities, Greek colonies or subjugated towns such as Oene, Cartagena, Emporiae, Tarraco (Cassetani), Tydae, Castulo (Tartessians), Hispalis (today's Seville), Tartessus, Munda, Carteia, Cordova and Nebrissa all furnished contingents for Hannibal's army (SI, III, 362ff), together with the ferocious inhabitants of Uxama, supposedly of Sarmatian ancestry. Many acted as light infantrymen: according to Livy (XXI, 55, 2), the Balearic slingers at the battle of the Trebbia are clearly indicated as *levis armatura*.

Celts

Mercenaries in Mediterranean Europe were found among the Iberians, Ligurians and Celts. In fact, those recruited in Iberia included Iberians, but also Celts (Celtiberians), and Liguria (north-west Italy) provided Ligurians, but also Celts (Celtoligurians). The warriors recruited in Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul (i.e. north and south of the Alps, respectively) were primarily Celts. During his march to join Hannibal in 208–207 BC, Hasdrubal Barca hired mercenaries 'along the northern coast of the Ocean [i.e. the Mediterranean]...[and] crossed the Pyrenees to the land of the Celts along with Celtiberians whom he had hired as mercenaries' (App., Hisp. 28; App., Hann. 52). Hasdrubal was welcomed by the Arverni, and later by other Alpine populations, and both followed him to fight against Rome (Livy, XXVII, 39, 6).

Among the Celtic peoples of north-eastern and north-central Italy only the Insubri and the Boii people (the latter, according to Cato, divided into 112 tribes) could be expected to provide allied manpower for Carthaginian military plans, while the others, as for example the Senones, had already been conquered by the Romans. At the outset of the Second Punic War Hannibal believed that the support of the Transalpine and Cisalpine Celts was essential for any military success in Italy, and therefore sent messages to the Celtic leaders in advance to seek their assistance, in the form of military contingents to be provided by the tribes as evidence of their anti-Roman political commitment (Pol., III, 34, 1–6). The presence of the Cisalpine Gauls and

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Ligurians is indirectly evidenced by Livy, who describes them out of battle and thus escaping the slaughter at the Metaurus river in 207 BC (Livy, XXVII, 49, 8).

The presence of Celts in the Carthaginian army in Italy indicated a spirit of greater commitment than was the case in various intra-tribal coalitions promoted by the same peoples. In the latter case, tribal motivation seems mainly to have been their own policies of expansion or maintenance of territories in competition with rivals near and far (although, of course, these included an important enemy like Rome). The Celtic tribes contributed to Hannibal's army differing levels of numbers and support, and were thus of varying military value. The historical sources state or imply that Hannibal's project was seen as a pole of attraction for the hopes of revenge nurtured by the Insubri and the Boii after the Romans had defeated the Senones; but they also describe Celtic indecision, ambiguity and uncertain reliability, at a time when Hannibal needed loyal, solid allies that he could count on in the long term (Pol., III, 106, 6).

NON-INFANTRY TROOPS

Cavalry

The Carthaginians made widespread use of cavalry, especially during the Punic Wars with Rome. It was mainly used to harass or pursue the enemy on the march, and to launch outflanking attacks in battle. At least after the 4th century BC this arm was mainly composed of Numidians, and to a lesser extent of tribes from the Atlantic coastal plains such as the Moors or Gaetuli. The Numidians were the best cavalrymen (especially the powerful tribe of the Massyli), followed by the Iberians. Both were light cavalry, who proved in many decisive battles their superiority to Roman horsemanship. Nevertheless, Carthage also possessed a heavy cavalry, probably an elite formation composed of young Punic aristocrats. This latter was used for shock action based upon mass impact in battle, so it was a less versatile asset than the nimble Numidians or Iberians, who were accustomed to fighting in looser, more manoeuvrable formations.

Terracotta statuette of a Puno-Libyan cavalryman, early 2nd century BC. Duncan Head has suggested that while the hair hangs down in ringlets in the Numidian style, the rider is seated on a saddlecloth; a ridge at his right wrist indicates long sleeves, and visible muscle details on his chest and a sharply out-turned ridge at the waist suggest a Hellenic 'muscled' cuirass. Note the Libyan crescent pendant around his neck. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Narducci)

Chariots

In the absence of a mobile field artillery to provide shock support for their infantry in battle, the early Carthaginians used scythed war-chariots and later fighting elephants. The chariots, widely used in the wars against Sardinians and Greeks, were drawn by a pair of horses (or sometimes four – Plutarch, Timoleon, 27, 4) and probably had a single axle; the basic two-man crew were a driver and an archer. Lethal blades were fixed on the wheels

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Detail from an alabaster sarcophagus representing a battle between Romans and Celts, 3rd century BC. The representation of a Celtic war-chariot of the Punic Wars period is very rare. The traditional weapons – sword, spear and javelins – were common to Celtic infantry, cavalry and chariot-riders. (Former Sozzi Collection, Archaeological Museum, Chiusi; author's photo)

and on the front part of the chariots (which were sometimes armoured), so that they could be used for direct charges to open gaps in the enemy's ranks. To succeed in such tactics the chariots needed open ground and linear enemy formations, but on islands like Sardinia and Sicily these conditions were seldom found except in the coastal areas. The tactic was undoubtedly of Persian origin, but although it was used for several centuries it was never really effective, because of the vulnerability of the horses and the difficulty of managing the chariots. Nevertheless, chariots were commonly employed by the Libyans, especially in the Sahara, and two-horse chariots are still described in Libyan use at Saguntum (SI, II, 81–82, 166, 200). In Hannibal's time some Celtiberian tribes also still fought in chariots, breeding excellent warhorses for this purpose (*Punica*, I, 223ff).

As a 'breakthrough' weapon that needed to be launched at high speed to disconcert and penetrate enemy units of infantry and cavalry, the chariots were usually arranged on the two wings of the Celtic ranks (Pol., II, 28, 5). In contemporary accounts their role in battle is, not surprisingly, always overshadowed by the large-scale employment of war-elephants, and in the first half of the 3rd century BC chariots disappeared almost completely except when used by commanders during parades (SI, III, 240).

Elephants

The elephants were perhaps the most lastingly famous asset of the Carthaginian army. These were not the African elephants *(Loxodonta africana*) that live on the savannah of Central and Southern Africa, but animals native to North Africa belonging to the now-extinct species *Loxodonta africana cyclotis* (or *Loxodonta atlantica*). These elephants were

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still living in the Punic area of Berberia, isolated in the region after the desiccation of the Sahara and malnourished from the lack of vegetation. They had neither the stature nor the strength of the Central African elephant, which can grow 3.5m (11ft 4in) tall at the shoulder; they were also less powerful than the 3m (9ft 9in) Indian elephant, but they could be domesticated as easily. The North African elephant reached a maximum height of 2.5m (8ft 2in); they had huge ears with rounded lobes, a high head carriage, a segmented or ridged trunk unlike the smooth proboscis of the Asian species, and long tusks. Their fairly modest height governed their employment in battle.

Despite some legends describing them as having the multiple qualities of almost divine animals, the Carthaginians used elephants only for war. The idea was suggested by the example of some Hellenistic monarchs (a reminder of Carthage's close ties with the Hellenistic world), after Alexander's army encountered them in the late 4th century. The first animals and their *mahout* drivers were probably Indian, brought in via the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt with which Carthage had close commercial relations. The Punics subsequently began to capture elephants themselves in the then-extensive southern woodlands of Algeria and Morocco; since Carthaginian power in Africa was then at its height, it was easy to acquire a large number of elephants fairly quickly.

From 262 BC hundreds of these animals were used, against the Romans in Sicily and against Regulus's mercenaries during his invasion of North Africa. They certainly had a powerful psychological effect on Roman legionaries, mercenary mutineers, and the inhabitants of the Alps alike. Their massive bulk, loud trumpeting, sharp tusks, and the amazing dexterity of their 'hand in the shape of a snake' were terrifying to those facing them in battle. To add to their fearsome image elephants were also used to crush prisoners sentenced to death, and their almost supernatural prestige was enhanced by dressing and equipping them richly with oriental-style fabrics. It also seems that Indian names were given even to animals born in Africa, and that they learned to recognize these names.

For battle it would appear that wooden superstructures with attached shields were sometimes mounted on their backs, and, according to Silius Italicus, long spears were fixed to their tusks to make these even more effective weapons. The use of 'towers' or *howdahs* on North African elephants is problematic, however. An Indian elephant could easily carry upon its back a boxy structure large enough to hold two or three archers, slingers or javelineers, but the same was not necessarily true of the smaller North African species. It seems probable, therefore, that the latter mainly made use of their physical strength and weight for impact, with the driver (in the Punic term, *cornac*) riding alone on the neck; but we cannot exclude the use of smaller (one-man?) towers or some simpler support for a crewman mounted on the back.

Horses hate the smell of elephants, and their approach might cause cavalry to break up and scatter. However, from the tactical point of view the elephants' main function in the attack on heavy infantry and fortifications was the same as that of World War II 'infantry tanks'. The most effective remedy to their use against formed infantry was the elastic defence: the Greek phalanx was too compact to perform this, but the Roman legion was much more flexible and articulated. No doubt based upon

Wall-painting from the necropolis of Marissa, in Idumaea. It seems to represent an elephant fitted with a protective headpiece and trunk-armour; see reconstruction on Plate D. An early 2nd-century stele of an elephant and its *cornac* (driver) from a *tophet* in Carthage shows the latter wearing a sharply conical helmet probably representing the Pilos type, and also illustrates a war standard. (Author's collection)

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the precedent of anti-chariot tactics, Scipio had his legions drilled to open up corridors through their ranks, in which the elephants could quickly be isolated and surrounded. While it still took the bravest and steadiest infantry to tackle them, they were not machines but only animals, and their relative intelligence made them vulnerable to extreme nervousness. In the midst of battle the cries, the cacophony of trumpets, blazing torches, and the pain of the wounds inflicted on them by spearmen and archers could drive them mad, and they became equally dangerous to their masters as to the enemy. In such cases the Carthaginians had no option but to shoot the elephant down themselves, or for the *cornac* to kill it by hammering an iron wedge down through its spine. (This method is said to have been invented by Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal – Livy, XXVII, 49, 1–2).

Famously, Hannibal attempted the exceptional feat of leading several dozen elephants across the Pyrenees and the Alps by forced marches, but many died of cold in the process. By the end of his Italian campaign only one survived, employed as a simple mount. By the terms of the treaty imposed after the battle of Zama in 202 BC, Carthage was both deprived of its remaining elephants and forbidden from taming others.

Artillery

The Punic armies used artillery against the Greek cities in Sicily. A general named Hannibal Mago conquered Selinus and Himera in 409 BC thanks to

D

THE MERCENARY REVOLT, 238 BC

Here rebel Iberian mercenaries are shown attacking a war-elephant and a Gaetulian horseman of the 'government' army of Hamilcar Barca.

1: Gaetulian cavalryman

According to Silius Italicus (II, 64), the Gaetuli from the Atlantic coastal plains of modern Morocco rode without reins; he describes the red woollen tunic (*Punica*, XVI, 569). The 'muscled' breastplate is from Livy (XXII, 48, 2), which refers expressly to the Numidian cavalrymen. His main offensive weapons are a pair of javelins with both a thrusting end and a wider cutting blade, as well as a dagger and sword. The thick saddlecloth of coarse linen is woven or embroidered with a typical Libyan pattern, as attested in the paintings at Gebel Mlezza, near Kerkouane a few miles south of Cape Bon.

2: Iberian cavalryman, *Cohors Sedetana*

This member of the aristocratic class of *equites* wears a bronze scale armour (*Punica*, III, 372) over a linen or leather under-cuirass. His Celtic-style bronze helmet is reconstructed after the specimen from the Pozo Moro burial. Note the use of a special black-coloured substance painted on his arms and legs, apparently serving both aesthetic and protective functions. He is armed with a *falcata* sword, and has just thrown one of his *falarica* javelins as an incendiary weapon against the elephant. Strabo and other ancient authors describe the Iberian horses as the quickest and strongest in all the armies; their natural beauty was amplified by the rich and complex harness woven from coloured wool dyed in vivid shades, as shown in detail in a variety of iconographic sources.

3: Balearic slinger

The Balearic slingers initially wore very little clothing, and indeed, according to Strabo (III, 5, 1), in the early period they fought naked. The Carthaginians probably gave them simple linen tunics when they began to enlist them into their armies (Diodorus Siculus, XIII, 54, 7); here he also has a short mantle, 'bagged' over his arm to carry sling bullets. They wore neither helmets nor body armour, and their only protection was *sparto* – a vegetable fibre – used to make wrappings around the thighs. At the time of their employment by Hannibal Barca they may also have been armed with short daggers and have carried small round shields for personal defence. Note the netted hairstyle, and the fact that he has a spare sling tied around his head.

4: Carthaginian war-elephant

Inspired by the paintings at the Marissa necropolis and by a small pottery statue today preserved in the Naples museum, this reconstructs the harness and decoration of an Indian war-elephant imported via Carthage's Ptolemaic trading partners, rather than the smaller North African native breed. Note the bronze defences of the head, trunk and forequarters. Over the imposing 'saddlecloth' a wooden superstructure or 'tower' reinforced on each side with a bronze shield is secured on the animal's back with chains and strong ropes: one passing under the belly, a second under the neck and a third under the tail. The driver is of Moorish origin; here we show him wearing a 'Phrygian'-style cap, as shown on a Carthaginian coin, and a bronze 'muscle' cuirass. Originating from the great plains of Atlantic North Africa, these *Mauri* are described by Silius Italicus guiding the elephants, with their headgear made of linen bands wrapped around the head. The superstructure holds an archer, a javelineer, and a standard-bearer with the characteristic insignia of a crescent and sun disc.

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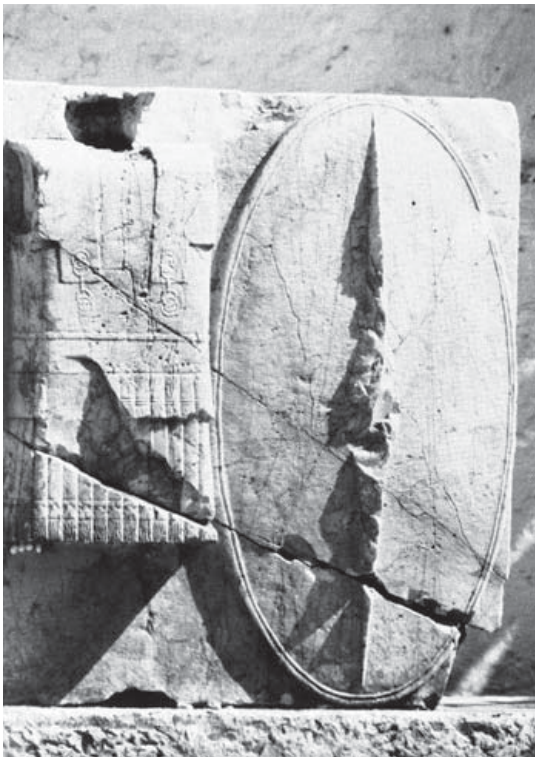

Carving of a *linothorax* with *pteryges*, and a shield of *thyreos* type, from the 2nd-century BC monument at Chemtou. The stiffened cuirass of layered linen was one of the most widely employed armours throughout the Mediterranean basin from the 5th century BC onwards, and Punic warriors were no exception. Some surviving traces of red colour on the smooth surface of the sculpted armour contradict the proposal of the eminent scholar Waurick that this is a representation of ringmail. (Photo courtesy Chemtou Archaeological Museum/Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

the use of the ram, mobile towers and mining. The Greeks did not take long to overtake their rivals by the invention of the torsion catapult *(gastraphetes)*, created by a Syracusan engineer at the time of Dionysius the Elder, who used it for the first time against Punic Motya in 398 BC. The energy provided by the twisting of cords allowed the projection of both darts, by means of a giant bow, and of stones by means of a swinging arm. The Carthaginians, too, would build a considerable number of these machines, termed (depending on their size) catapults, crossbows or scorpions. Small machines threw incendiary projectiles coated with flaming pitch, as used by Hannibal Barca at his siege of Saguntum in 219 BC (SI, I, 320). High mounds were erected to allow attacks on the ramparts of besieged cities (SI, I, 348ff), and formations of soldiers sheltering under close-packed shields in 'tortoise' style allowed miners to sap their way up to the walls (SI, I, 365ff).

In 149 BC the Romans reportedly requisitioned as many as 20,000 war machines which were stored in Carthaginian arsenals, and during the final siege the women of Carthage offered their hair to be twisted into cords for the construction of artillery to replace them.

TACTICS

The Punic armies were particularly strong in cavalry and light infantry, but in battle the phalanx formation was standard for the heavy infantry. The dominance of the heavily armoured hoplite at the apogee of the Greek city-states had been shaken since the beginning of the 4th century BC by the introduction of the *peltast* light infantryman, less powerful but more mobile on the battlefield.

The fighting method of the Carthaginian phalanx was very similar to that of the Macedonians: a closed formation of 4,096 men, formed by 16 companies of 256 soldiers, each drawn up in a square-shaped block 16 men wide by 16 men deep. Its strength lay in its coordinated mass, all the men moving together with their spears pointing towards the enemy, thus forming a (theoretically) unbreakable wall. Usually the weak point was the right flank, because the hoplite was wielding his spear with both hands and could not manoeuvre his slung shield to protect his right side. In Hannibal's army this problem was solved by using light infantry, such as the Turdetani, to cover the right flank of heavy formations.

Polybius gives us detailed descriptions of the arrangement of Hannibal's armies, and of his ability to combine the various contingents to best effect. For example, at Cannae (Pol., III, 113, 1), after having positioned his slingers and pikemen across the Aufidus river and stationed them in front, he led the rest of his forces out of camp and crossed the stream in two places, drawing up the army opposite the enemy. On his left, close to the river, he placed his

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Iberian and Celtic horse facing the Roman cavalry; next to these were half of his heavily armed Africans; then the Iberian and Celtic infantry in the centre; right of them the other half of the Africans; and finally, on his right wing, the Numidian horsemen. After thus drawing up his whole army in a straight line, he led the central companies of Spaniards and Celts into the advance. They kept contact on their flanks with the rest of the army, which gradually 'echeloned off' on both sides so as to produce a convex crescent-shaped battle line with the flanking companies growing shallower as the line was prolonged. His intention was to employ the Africans as a reserve force and to begin the action with the Spaniards and Celts.

We know that this strategy was victorious at Cannae, where his wings encircled the enemy who were pushing his centre back, but Hannibal had more problems with Roman generals when they only acted defensively without offering to meet him in pitched battle. Fighting against Appius Claudius, the Punic army surrounded his camp and at first harassed him with skirmishers with the object of provoking the Romans to come out and give battle. But as they did not respond the attack finally became very much like an attempt to storm the camp; the cavalry advanced in squadrons, and with loud cries hurled their javelins into the camp, while the infantry attacked in maniples and attempted to tear down the palisade. But the Romans used their own lightly armed forces to repel the assault on the palisade, and kept their heavy legionaries in their ranks under their standards, merely protecting themselves from the shower of missiles. Hannibal was dissatisfied at being unable either to penetrate into the camp or to provoke the Romans to come out and do battle.

Stele of a warrior from a Carthage *tophet*, early 2nd century BC, now in the Museum of Carthage. Note the simple but unmistakable representation of a shield of *thyreos* type and a bowl-shaped Montefortino-style helmet. The man was probably a veteran of the Second Punic War who fell at the battle of Zama. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Charles-Picard 1967)

The tactics of the Carthaginians also had an effect on the traditional fighting style of their mercenary troops, such as the Celts. Gallic armies were divided into infantry, and cavalry and chariots (Pol., II, 23, 4). In ancient

Another scene from the 3rd-century sarcophagus formerly in the Sozzi Collection, showing Romans fighting Celts; this probably represents a battle during the Punic Wars. The Celtic weaponry is depicted accurately: note the long sword, and the Celtic shield that Polybius describes (II, 30, 3 & 8) as 'too short and narrow to completely cover the huge bodies of the Gaesati'. (Archaeological Museum, Chiusi; author's photo)

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times the typical characteristics of Celtic warriors were well known: their love of drinking and quarreling, their barbarism, individualism, impulsiveness, and a certain lack of discipline, of tactical and strategic intelligence, and of stamina. If this image has become a cliché, it remains true that the Celts traditionally fought as individuals or in small groups around their immediate chieftains. Against troops in formed ranks their usual tactic was a frontal attack by a mass of individuals or groups, delivered at a rush to achieve maximum impact. This was very expensive in terms of energy and, if it did not have the immediate effect of breaking into the opposing ranks, it left the Celts themselves exhausted and vulnerable to organized counter-attack. The need to adapt their tactics to those employed by the Romans led the Celts to a gradual acceptance of the logic of formations, as happened within the Carthaginian army. It is also interesting that at Cannae the Celtic (and Iberian) riders, instead of using their horses for tactical manoeuvres and charges in the front line, dismounted at the appropriate opportunities and fought on foot: 'once plunged into the fray, they dismounted and fought clinging body to body with their enemies' (Pol., III, 115, 3).

At the battle of the Metaurus they followed the decisions and movement orders of the Carthaginians. The Celts did not engage by their traditional method of mass shock, but remained where Hasdrubal had placed them on his left wing – where, because of difficult terrain and steep slopes, they failed to come into contact with the Romans (Livy, XXVII, 33). Indeed, on this occasion there were neither major attacks nor counter-attacks, but only localized and unimportant skirmishes that allowed the Roman commander, Claudius Nero, to divert a portion of his army to the left across the rear of his line to outflank Hasdrubal's right wing, taking the Gallic troops in the right flank and defeating them. Livy (XXVII, 49, 8) wrote that 'the Celts suffered the bulk of the losses,[and] a part of the Cisalpine riders and infantry withdrew to their homelands'. Besides the absence of the dynamic element of initial impetuous assault, in this battle the Celts also lacked the war-chariots that they had used in previous battles, such as Talamone.

During the 3rd century BC it is evident that Celtic forces to some degree moved away from their traditional individual style of combat and towards a more valuable cohesion; at the end of the century they were showing some adaptation to the enemy's more developed techniques, while still retaining their specific strengths.

E

LIFE IN THE CITY, MID-4th CENTURY BC

1 & 2: Carthaginian citizen infantry

These aristocratic warriors belong to the famous Sacred Band, who were equipped with 'costly and brilliant' hoplite armours in the Hellenic fashion. The 'muscled' or anatomical cuirass, worn here in silvered iron by E1, is visible on many Carthaginian stelae. Alternatives were the *linothorax*, as worn by E2, or scaled armour in the Eastern tradition; both warriors have Hellenic hanging *pteryges* covering the belly and groin. Note that below these E2 shows red-painted patterns on his thighs; such body-paint is confirmed by archaeological finds in Punic graves. The defensive equipment was completed with a bronze helmet often of characteristic 'conical' shape, as shown by iconographic sources; bronze greaves; and a big shield made of wood covered in leather, with embossed bronze ornaments. E1's shield shows an image of the goddess Artemis, and E2's the eye motif that was believed to ward off ill-fortune. An important coin, minted to celebrate a victory won by the Syracusans over the Punics in the 4th century, shows a winged victory erecting a triumphal trophy of the spoils of war in the form of a Carthaginian panoply of this type.

3: Greek mercenary

In the style of this period, his only dress is the short mantle or *ephaptis*. Note (centre) the inside surface of his *hôplon* shield, elaborately decorated.

4: Carthaginian women dancing

The background scene inside a typical Punic house follows the reconstruction by Martin-Hennin. The dancers remind us that Carthaginian women enjoyed a reputation for social freedom, especially in their relationships with men.

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Bronze helmet from Sulcis, Sardinia, 6th century BC. This second specimen of the proto-Corinthian helmet type retains the vestigial remains of an attachment for a crest, and of the lining, which was often made with a false side-beard. (Photo courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

Side and back views of a 6th-century BC bronze greave from Sulcis. The Carthaginian hoplites of that period were armed like their Greek counterparts, with a panoply of armour covering the body, so the absence of heavy bronze corselets from 6th-century graves such as the Sulcis find supports the hypothesis that organic cuirasses of *linothorax* type were then being used. (Photos courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

ARMS & EQUIPMENT

Carthaginian & Libyo-Phoenician infantry and cavalry

Iconographies of various kinds from North Africa, ranging from stelae and moulded items to decorated ostrich shells and razors, represent warriors and warrior-divinities. It is reasonable to suppose that these images are related to the reality of the material culture of the Punic armies.

In the early period of its history the Carthaginian army resembled those raised by the kings of the Near East, and later those of the great Greek city-states. In both cases these armies were composed of bands recruited at a local level from different territories, which retained the tactics and therefore the weapons and equipment of their areas of origin.

Armour

In the earliest period, together with proto-Corinthian helmets, some warriors wore protection for the arms and legs conforming to the equipment of the archaic Greek hoplite. They fought at close range with a spear and short sword, or as heavy mounted infantry. Some Punic stelae depict panoplies as a kind of mannequins covered with weapons, probably representing the war gear of the dead (and perhaps captured enemy trophies). In some stelae round shields are also shown. These images remind us of the panoplies that the Greeks displayed on walls, pilasters or funerary columns. The value of these Punic representations is enhanced by the curious images of trophies which decorated the fronts of some buildings, resembling a stake covered with pieces of armour and 'armed' with a shield and spear. Despite our relative ignorance of Carthaginian beliefs, it is reasonable to interpret these as some kind of propaganda by which the oligarchic ruling families encouraged a warrior mystique. From the period of the Barca family's ascendancy we also have images of shields, helmets and military daggers shown as the main decorative motifs on many votary stelae and funerary monuments.

The brilliant weaponry of the Sacred Band is described by Plutarch in his life of the mercenary Corinthian general Timoleon (28): iron breastplates and bronze helmets, great shields and swords. Not only was much bronze and iron gear taken from the bodies of the 3,000 native Carthaginians who fell

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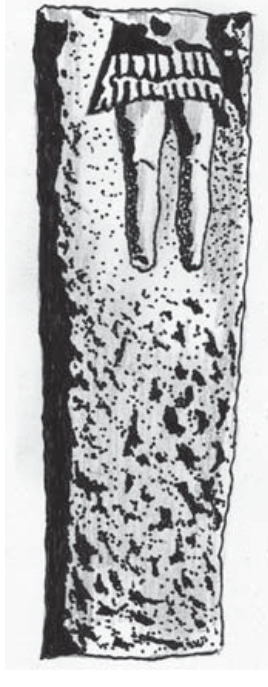
Bronze 'muscled' cuirass, 5th–3rd century BC, from Etruria or southern Italy. In the main heavy-infantry battle formation, the phalanx, Punic hoplites were equipped like those of the Greek cities. The descriptions in the sources, combined with lapidary evidence, offer us images of warriors protected with a helmet, a bronze cuirass, and a round *aspis* or *clipeus* shield. (British Museum, London; author's photo)

Broken 4th- or 3rd-century BC votive stele from the 'Island of the Admiral' in the military harbour at Carthage, now in the Museum of Carthage, Tunis. It clearly represents – as do many surviving military stelae – a warrior wearing a *statos* 'muscled' cuirass fitted with protective strapping fringes *(pteryges)*, and greaves on the legs. Sometimes such stelae also include a spear and a helmet, the latter sometimes depicted as a triangular shape to represent a tall 'conical' style. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Charles-Picard)



at the battle of the Krimisos in 341 BC, but also silvered and gilt armour. We are told that 1,000 breastplates of superior workmanship and beauty and a total of 10,000 shields were assembled and displayed by Timoleon's tent, and along with the report of his victory he sent the most splendid of the captured armour back to his homeland.

Helmets of Greek *piloi* (Pilos) type are represented on some stelae and coins, while the 'triangular'-shaped helmets represented in other carvings probably refer to conical helmets of Assyrian typology, originally the most common in the army of Carthage. Only one original helmet of this type has been found, from the Numidian royal grave of El-Soumaa; although dated as 2nd century BC this helmet has a clear Puno-African origin, with typical ear-shaped decorations. Crested bronze helmets were often given to officers (SI, I, 401); and a distinctive helmet of Libyan-Punic type was 'conspicuous for the horns that curved over his temples' (SI, I, 415), a detail clearly linked

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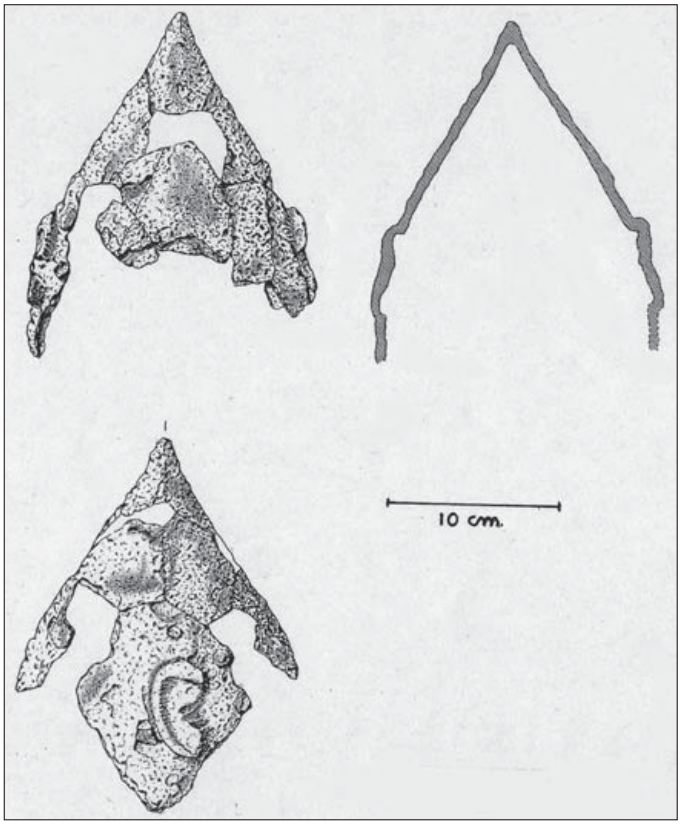
with the cult of Baal-Hammon (SI, III, 10). Helmets of generals were surmounted by a wide crest, that of Hannibal having a scarlet plume with a long, flowing horsetail: 'The plume that nodded on his head showed a deadly brightness, even as a comet terrifies fierce kings with its flaming tail and showers blood-red fire' (SI, I, 460ff). From another passages of Silius Italicus (I, 501, 525) Hannibal seems to wear a helmet fitted with additional plumes, probably in imitation of that of Alexander the Great.

The chapel of Carton at Salambo contained the ceramic statue of a god wearing a Greek-style armour. This statue probably represented Adad, perhaps the most warlike god of the Phoenician pantheon. Stelae from the sanctuary of Cirta, dating from the 2nd to the 1st century BC, show similar armours on trophies which are carved with much more precision than those from Carthage.

A beautiful and precious armour was found in a Punic tomb at Ksour es-Saf in the Byzacena area. It consists of two heart-shaped bronze plates covering the chest and back. The decoration, which is identical on both, shows the helmeted head of the goddess Athena placed below two pectoral discs. This armour is not of local production but comes from a 3rd-century BC workshop in Campania, Italy. It was probably purchased or looted by one of Hannibal's Libyan soldiers and taken back to Africa. The data from this grave, as illustrated in the recent studies by Fariselli, show that it belonged to a Libyan warrior rather than an Italic mercenary as might initially be supposed. That it was placed in the tomb shows that it was reverently associated with the dead warrior's memory.

This Ksour es-Saf find is a dramatic reminder that the equipment of an army might also include elements originating in other regions; armour was valuable, and a multi-ethnic army campaigning abroad had many opportunities to acquire it. For example, at the battle of Cannae, Hannibal armed the Libyan and African troops in Roman fashion with equipment taken from fallen enemies, probably including ringmail and Italic armours (Pol., III, 87, 3 & 114, 1; Livy, XXVIII, 46, 4): 'The Africans were armed in the Roman fashion, Hannibal having equipped them with the choicest of the arms captured in the previous battles.' Such captured weaponry replaced in part that given to the Carthaginians by Braneus, appointed by Hannibal as leader of the Allobroges (Livy, XXI, 31, 6) before the passage of the Alps. These weapons, which replaced Carthaginian equipment that had become worn with age, were definitely of Celtic type (Pol., III, 49, 11). Thus, while we know from the ancient sources that different peoples were characterized by specific weaponry, we should not interpret this



The iron helmet from El-Soumaa, 2nd century BC, as reconstructed from many fragments: front and right-side views, and complete front silhouette; compare with Plate E1. Now in the museum at Constantine, Algeria (ancient Cirta), this helmet is estimated to have been 25cm (9.8in) high. It is notable for its combination of a conical shape typical of the Near East, with embossed ears, believed to have been a North African characteristic. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Waurick)

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information too rigidly, i.e. 'Celtic weaponry = Celtic warrior'. The sources in fact confirm that weapons of foreign origin might be used not only by individuals but also by whole contingents.

The monumental altar of Simitthus/Chemtou dating from the middle of the 2nd century BC tells us many things about the equipment of Hannibal's last army at Zama. It attests the employment of *linothorakes*, fabric cuirasses of Greek type, furnished with hanging *pteryges* flaps. Made of multiple layers of linen glued together, some models of this armour were also fitted with various overlapping metal scales. These were of bronze, varying from 1–4cm (0.4–1.6in), and were sewn to the linen background. A second linen protection was worn under this armour, having attached *pteryges* that hung down visibly below the cuirass to protect the belly, groin and upper thighs. The decoration of such armour was often realized with geometrical patterns of various colours, mainly red, light blue and black, and with symbols linked to the Carthaginian religion.

The armours of generals, officers and heavy cavalry were often personalized. At the siege of Saguntum, Hannibal is mentioned wearing his father's armour (SI, 319, 525), made of gilded iron scales and probably the product of a North African workshop. (The famous scale armour from Lake Trasimene, now preserved in the Royal Ontario Museum, is more likely to have been made in a Carthaginian workshop than an Italic or Roman one, though its style and characteristics oblige the present authors to suppose that an early medieval date is in fact more probable.) Ringmail armour of exquisite workmanship was also employed by generals – see Plate H1a.

Shields

The main Punic shield represented in the sculptures is the typically Hellenic round type (the Greek *aspis* or Latin *clipeus*) of about 90–93cm (35–36in) diameter. The Carthaginian nobles, who always performed the military service from which the majority of their compatriots were exempted, loved to wear beautiful armor. Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal Barca had a silver *clipeus* adorned with his portrait, which the Romans captured and set up

LEFT Pottery jar painted with a detailed image of a Campanian warrior, 4th–3rd century BC. For at least 200 years between the 4th and 2nd centuries the defensive panoply of the Oscan-Samnite warriors who served as mercenaries in Greek, Roman and Carthaginian armies seems to have been characterized by helmets of Chalcidian-Attic typology; 'disc' cuirasses both plain and embossed, or 'muscled' breastplates; wide bronze belts, and greaves. Note this spearman's Attic helmet with a central crest flanked by two feather plumes, and his triple-disc cuirass. (Archaeological Museum, Capua; author's photo)

RIGHT Lucanian bronze triple-disc cuirass, *c.*300 BC. Many examples of this typical armour of Oscan, Campanian, Lucanian and Samnite warriors have been found in the Italian central highlands and on the coasts, and one in North Africa. This piece is fairly representative; broad double plates over the shoulders and round the sides, linked together with small rings, connect to the breast and back plates by means of hooks. (Archaeological Museum, Paestum; author's photo)

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above the door of the Capitol. The detailed description by Silius Italicus (I, 522) of Hannibal's shield gives us an idea of what an arresting spectacle the brazen, embossed and chiselled Hellenic shield of a Punic general would have presented. In this particular case it was the product of a Galician workshop (II, 395–397, 406ff): it bore scenes referring to the origin of Carthage, of Dido's meeting with Aeneas, and her suicide; of Hannibal's oath on the altar of the nether gods; of his father Hamilcar's campaigns; of the triumph of the Spartan Xanthippus over Regulus, the latter's torture, and death on the cross; scenes of African life with lionesses, hunters, shepherds and huts; and finally the siege and conquest of Saguntum – all embossed and chased in shining metal.

Carthaginian shields were usually decorated with blazons related to the military unit, or with patterns evoking religious meanings. Some shields, though of glittering bronze like that of Hannibal at Saguntum, were also fitted with an *umbo* boss (SI, II, 211, 246, 256). One Carthaginian officer at Saguntum bore a shield chiselled with a representation of the source of a river (SI, I, 407). In the frieze of Chemtou various shield blazons are shown: an Apollonian griffin emblem (or perhaps a lioness); the source of a river with the Lernian Hydra; the club of Herakles-Melqart; an apotropaic eye (to turn away evil, as sometimes painted on the prows of Mediterranean ships); and a magnificent embossed decoration with Medusa's head, as traditionally displayed on Athena's *aegis*. This last image valuably confirms the care taken by Silius Italicus in researching his sources for the appearance of Carthaginian warriors, because he reports an identical shield for a warrior from Galpes near Gibraltar (see Plate H2).

Aspis or *clipeus* shield sculpted in relief on a monument from the 3rd-century BC Numidian sanctuary of Kbour-Clib; it depicts an embossed blazon of high quality representing the goddess Artemis. (Photo courtesy Bardo Museum, Tunis/ Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

The elite body of heavy cavalry was mainly composed of citizens of Carthage. The Punic god of war, Adad, was generally depicted riding a horse, and the horse alone was often depicted as his symbol. One of the legends about the foundation of Carthage held that when digging the foundations for the Capitol the workers discovered the head of an ox; this was considered an unlucky portent of perpetual servitude, so the site was abandoned. Digging elsewhere, they uncovered the head of a horse, and since this was the symbol of a powerful warrior the city's Capitol was built there. If, as we believe, there is an authentic Phoenician reference behind this legend, it is probably linked with Adad, who was honoured by a cult in Carthage from the earliest times, and whose symbol of a warhorse was a blazon of the Carthaginian cavalry shield.

Other representations on stelae from the beginning of the 2nd century BC and on the slightly later Simitthus frieze show an elongated oval shield with a median ridge (the Greek *thyreos*). This shield, of Western origin and light materials, is also mentioned in the inventory of weapons captured by the Romans in Carthaginian arsenals in 149 BC.

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Weapons

On a stele from Cirta this oblong shield is shown in conjunction with a long sword, two javelins and a conical helmet, probably showing the panoply of a light infantry soldier rather than that of a hoplite. This shield is also associated in some stelae with a sword whose hilt has a very characteristic shape, with two spheres at the top and ending in 'V'-antennae below. This type of sword was both a slashing and a stabbing weapon (SI, I, 515–516); it was common among Italic and Celtic warriors as well as among the Celtiberians, and was certainly introduced into North Africa by European mercenaries. The sword used by Hannibal at the siege of Saguntum was (*Punica*, I, 429ff) forged by a legendary Iberian smith, Temisus.

A very important but forgotten discovery was made in 1890 by Delattre. Excavating a Punic grave on the hill of St Louis in Carthage, he found fragments of copper at the height of the dead man's waist, composed of a ring and a double sheet 4cm (1.57in) wide, which had a 'Y' and a 'T' shape at the edges. These were fragments of a military belt, associated with the remains of a weapon: perhaps a short sword or dagger, with parts of the wooden scabbard and of an iron blade ending in an antenna hilt, respectively 40cm and 42cm (15.8in and 16.5in) long. The French archaeologist believed that the grave belonged to a member of the early Carthaginian military elite.

Iron spearheads, 6th century BC, from Bitia in Sardinia. The example with a crossbar is 35cm (13.8in) long; while this shape is traditionally associated with hunting spears, similar weapons were used against the Greeks in the sea battle of Alalia in 535 BC. The other spearhead measures 40cm (15.8in). The first archaeological finds offering evidence of a certain consistency among the weapons of western Phoenician and Punic warriors are the archaic graves on Sardinia dating from the late 7th to the early 6th century BC. The Italian archaeologists who found these weapons attributed them to light infantrymen. (Photo courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

The heavy, curved, single-edged *kopis* slashing sword, with a hooked-over pommel forming a knuckle-guard, was known in Greece from the late 6th century BC, and examples have been found in Spain. After the 4th century straight, double-edged Greek short swords became common; these were probably similar to those represented on Hellenistic monuments, e.g. in the famous 3rd-century Macedonian tomb of Lyson and Kallikles.[1] They were worn slung across the body on a baldric from the right shoulder. Among the weapons depicted in the friezes of Chemtou there is a long, straight cavalry sword with an asymmetric hilt shaped like a bird's head; this detail again echoes the Lyson and Kallikles tomb-paintings.

At the beginning of the wars against Rome, infantrymen were still armed with a spear and a Greek type of sword. The spear of the phalangites was of varying length according to their position in the phalanx, but usually ranged from 3–6m (9ft 8in–19ft 7in). Javelins and spears were the main cavalry weapons, and are often mentioned in the hands of commanders (SI, I, 305, Hannibal fighting with a *jaculum* at Saguntum; also II, 400, Hannibal with sword and spear). Javelins and also bows were used by Punic aristocrats for hunting (SI, I, 394); but one of the pieces of evidence for a 'Westernization' of the Carthaginian army was the relative lack of importance of archers, in contrast to their essential role in the Assyrian and Persian armies. Nevertheless, some arrowheads have been found in Punic tombs of the 7th and 6th centuries, showing an interesting barbed shape. A magnificent carving from Utica shows a kneeling naked warrior, wearing a large helmet while using a bow and arrow. Various seals show Carthaginian officers dressed like Herakles-Melqart, with a lion's-head headdress and holding a recurved (composite?) bow.

1 See MAA 477, *Macedonian Armies after Alexander 323–168 BC*

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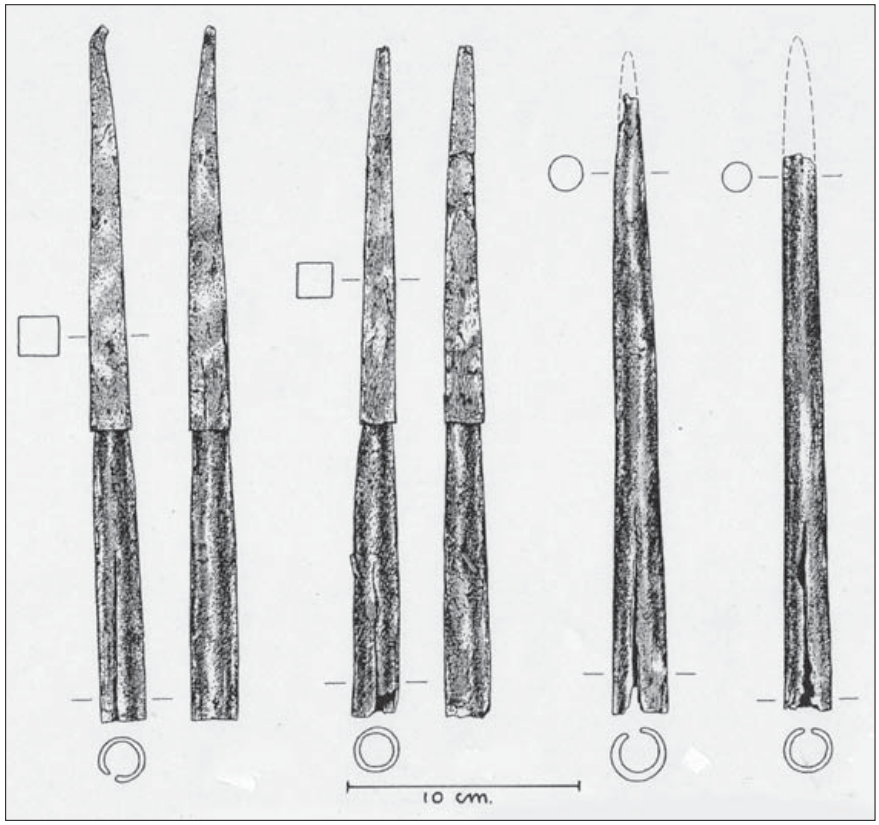
ABOVE Iron spear-butt, spearhead and small dagger, 6th century BC. Among the mainly iron weapons found in Sardinian Punic and Phoenician graves of the period are identifiable leaf-shaped spear blades of this unusual cross-ribbed type. The spear-butts were identifiable as such by their positioning in the tomb relative to the spearheads. (Courtesy of Antiquarium, Oristano; author's photo)

BELOW Small dagger, or possibly a javelin-head, 6th century BC. The Phoenician-Punic graves in Sardinia revealed both daggers with ox tongue-shaped blades, and narrow iron javelin-heads with a bronze core and base or 'hilt'. These were found enclosed in the remains of leather sheaths. (Courtesy of Antiquarium, Oristano; author's photo)

North African cavalry and infantry

We know the Numidian horsemen from the images engraved on stelae from the Constantine area of modern Algeria. Their main weapon was the javelin (Sall., Jug., 6); like their infantry, they also carried a small shield, and long, narrow darts thrown with force and high precision. Some of them, probably the leaders, also used swords, as shown by the El-Soumaa grave. Silius Italicus claimed that they poisoned the blades of their javelins, thus 'disgracing the



2nd-century BC javelin-heads from El-Soumaa. Some finds from this site correspond with the description (*Punica*, III, 250) of the javelins used by Libyo-Phoenicians from Barce as having long, smooth points – note the pair on the right with round-section heads, contrasting with the other four-cornered heads. The round-section heads also have a parallel in some Roman javelin-heads of 133 BC found at Numantia in Spain. (Constantine Museum; drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Ulbert)

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steel' (III, 269ff); the use of poisoned darts was still typical of Nubians and Ethiopians in the Late Antique period.

The Nubians protected their heads as well as their bodies with many folds of linen. The Macae, who pitched tents in their camps in Phoenician fashion, had their backs covered with the bristling hide of a wild goat, wore shaggy beards, and carried a 'curved javelin'. The Marmaridae and the Baniuta fought with all-wooden javelins with the heads simply hardened by fire.

The Numidians' superb horsemanship was achieved while riding their young horses bareback and using the simplest head-stall without a bit (*Punica*, I, 215); they used just a light switch, which they plied between the horse's ears (SI, III, 293). Coins from the Numidian mint of King Sifax, at the end of the 3rd century BC, show us princes on horseback with broad cloaks billowing in the wind. Following the tradition of his people, Prince Naravas rode with neither saddle nor harness, controlling his mount with a rod held between its ears.

Iberians

The Spaniards used several different missile weapons according to their regional origins. The Celtiberian *falarica* was compared by Livy with the Roman *pilum*, and the *soliferrum* had a long shaft completely of iron. Spanish weapons are probably represented on a funerary stele from Cirta. On the other hand, Numidian javelins were reportedly also used by the Asturians (SI, III, 3 34). The Arbacians are mentioned as being armed with slender javelins or darts (SI, III, 363).

The horsemen were armed with spear, curved *falcata sword* (see below) and dagger. The shields and swords of the Iberian mercenaries are described by Polybius (III, 114, 1) in comparison with those of the Celts: 'The shields of the Spaniards and Celts were very similar, but their swords were entirely different, those of the Spaniards thrusting with as deadly effect as they cut, but the Gallic sword being able only to slash, and requiring a long sweep to do so'. It is clear that here the Greek historian is speaking first of the deadly Iberian straight, double-edged sword, ancestor of the Roman legionary's *gladius hispaniensis*, by contrast with the long Celtic slashing sword that is widely confirmed by archaeology.

The *falcata* (a modern denomination) was a sword with a curved, single-edged blade swelling wider in the middle, and sharpened on both edges where it pitches down towards the point ('Bowie-knife' style). This slash-and-stab weapon, like the small, round *caetra* shield, was specific to the south-western areas of Spain (Andalucia, Murcia and Alicante). Analysis of the archaeological finds in funerary contexts suggests that the *falcata* was present only in the graves of high-status individuals, and thus conferred a certain prestige.

The panoply of the cavalryman was often completed by scale armour, greaves and *caetra*.

Terracotta disc representing a Carthaginian cavalryman, 6th century BC. This image in relief, only 9mm (0.35in) wide, shows a nobleman riding bareback and accompanied by his dog. Even at this scale he can be seen to have a Greek helmet of some type, a spear and a round shield. Behind him is the symbol of the sun disc; ahead of him that of the lotus flower. He may be a representation of the war-god Adad. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

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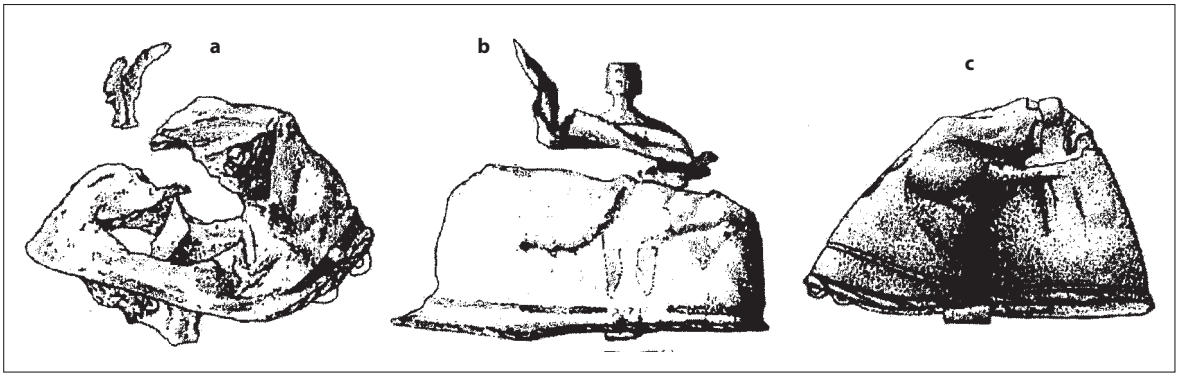

Helmets of 'Montefortino' type found in the graves of Carthaginian Iberian mercenaries, 3rd century BC: (a) from Cabecico del Tesoro, Murcia; (b) Pozo Moro, Albacete; (c) Castellones de Ceal, Jaén. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Fernando Quesada Sanz)

However, the kind of shield given to the Iberians by Polybius is not the round *caetra* (though this was diffused among them, and even used by other mercenaries) but the elongated-oval *thyreos* made of hide over wood, with the *umbo* central on a long median reinforcing ridge, similar to that of the Celtic shield.

The Pozo Moro burial

The occasional acquisition of individual pieces from other operational theatres is attested by some helmets found in the Iberian Peninsula, probably booty taken from the Romans. In this context we can place the helmet from a cremation burial found at Pozo Moro, Spain. This grave contained some pottery including an Attic black-glaze *kantharos* dating from 375–350 BC, an Iberian brooch, and a complete set of weapons: an Iberian *falcata*, a spearhead and spear-butt, one or two javelins, a big handgrip for a round shield, a bronze helmet, a bent La Tène sword without the scabbard, and, among minor metal objects, an element from a La Tène bivalve shield-boss. While some of these items are consistent with the 4th century, the presence of the helmet and of the La Tène sword might suggest a more recent date, e.g. the time of the Punic Wars (although the lack of a scabbard deprives us of the best chronological indicator). The sword itself is 72cm (28.4in) long, with a 62.5cm (24.6in) blade having plain rounded shoulders and parallel edges, no mid-rib, and apparently with a short, rounded point (today badly corroded). The fragment of iron shield-boss is of a type usually dated to the 4th century but also found in 3rd- or even 2nd-century contexts.

The grave seems be that of an Iberian warrior with a set of Celtic weapons. However, the helmet poses a particular problem: it seems to be much later, and has been dated by Garcia Maurino to the latter stages of the Second Punic War. It presents a lot of punched and incised decoration on the rim and neck-guard, holes for attaching cheek-guards, an iron ring at the back for anchoring chin-thongs, and a decorated knob on top of the bowl. Above all, a punched Latin inscription 'MVLVS' ('mule') on the inside of the neck-guard is probably the mark of the original Italic owner. As underlined by Quesada Sanz, the helmet shares an important characteristic with the famous 'Braganza brooch' helmet: two holders soldered to the sides of the bowl to hold vertical plumes – a characteristic of some Roman legionary helmets, although surviving examples are rare. However, iconographic and literary sources tell us that Iberian peoples also used crests and plumes on helmets; according to Strabo (III, 3, 6), Lusitanians used helmets with the three plumes (one central and two side) implied by the Pozo Moro find.

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The lack of cheek-pieces was another important Iberian characteristic, again as represented on the Braganza brooch. Many well-preserved helmets found in Italy and Gaul still have their cheek-pieces, and it seems clear from the iconography that Italics (including Celts) all used helmets with face protection. However, no example found in Iberian burials or sanctuaries has cheek-pieces, and warriors represented on pottery also show helmets without them. So it seems that the Iberians deliberately dispensed with cheek-pieces, and the warrior who acquired the Pozo Moro helmet may have removed them on purpose.

Incidentally, the Iberians sometimes added animal-heads to their helmets to increase their fearsome appearance; Silius Italicus (III, 384ff) tells us that the warrior-hunters of Uxama, armed with spears, decorated their helmets with the open jaws of wild beasts. At Cannae the Celts and Spaniards were drawn up in alternate companies, the Gauls being naked and the Spaniards 'dressed in linen tunics bordered with purple, as was their custom' (Pol., III, 114, 4). A specific practice of Edetan warriors was to cover their forearms, lower legs and feet with a natural product that dried and hardened the skin, simultaneously giving it a blackened colour.

Balearic slingers

These renowned specialists among the Iberian mercenaries each used three slings of different lengths (SI, III, 363): the first was long, to throw as far as possible; the second, shorter, to hit close-up targets; and the third of a medium length, to cover the ranges in between. According to Diodorus Siculus (V, 18), one was worn looped around the head and another around the flanks while they held the third, but Strabo says that all three were fastened around the head (III, 5, 1). The slings were made of vegetable fibres (reed) or of interlaced animal tendons or sinew. Diodorus goes on to say that '… they are so accurate in their aim that in the majority of cases they never miss the target before them. The reason for this is the continual practice which they get from childhood, in that their mothers compel them, while still young boys, to use the sling continually; for there is set up before them as a target a piece of bread fastened to a stake, and the novice is not permitted to eat until he has hit the bread'.

Light lead sling-bullets *(glandes)* from the siege of Carthage in 149–146 BC; note that they have been cast with an elongated or almond shape. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

The sling was used by the man while standing erect, whirling the light thong three times around his head before launching the stone or lead bullet (SI, I, 314), and volleys from Balearic slingers could have devastating effects on helmets, armour, shields and faces. According to Diodorus Siculus (V, 18), 'In the business of war they hurl much larger stones than do any other slingers, and with such force that the missile seems to have been shot, as it were, from a catapult; consequently, in their assaults upon walled cities they strike the defenders on the battlements and disable them, and in pitched battles they crush both shields and helmets and every kind of protective armour.' According to Silius

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Italicus, at Cannae the consul Aemilius Paulus was killed by a hit from a Balearic slinger after having lost his helmet. Sometimes slingers would also simply throw stone bullets by hand with accuracy and force; Hannibal himself was trained in this exercise (SI, I, 317; II, 135).

Celts

From Polybius we understand that a certain type of equipment was characteristic of the Gallic *'reguli'*. He describes an occasion when Hannibal motivated his troops before Trebbia by forcing two prisoners to fight in single combat to the death, wearing 'suits of armour normally worn by the kings of the Gauls' (Pol., III, 62, 5). Livy, clearly drawing upon Polybius, speaks generically of *'Gallica arma'* and *'ferrum'*, the latter being synonymous with the sword (Livy, XXI, 42, 1–4). 'Complete armament' should perhaps be interpreted as the complex of traditional weapons rather than as the helmet and ringmail or leather armour.

More specifics are provided by Strabo (who differs in some cases from Polybius and Livy): 'the weapons of the Celts are proportional to the large size of their bodies: they consist of a long sword suspended on the right side, a long shield, spears and a kind of javelins, bows and slings' (Strabo, IV, 4, 3). Diodorus also tells us that Celts carried their swords on the right side, hanging from a belt around the waist rather than a baldric over the shoulder like the Greeks or Etruscans (V, 30, 3). He describes (V, 29–30) the fighting techniques of the Celts, including war-chariots, and lists the weapons used: shields as tall as a man, with embossed figures of animals in rolled bronze for both decoration and reinforcement; bronze helmets with high crests, horns, or figures of birds and animals on the top; iron ringmail armour; long swords hanging from the right side by means of iron or bronze chain; belts plated with gold or silver; spears, javelins, and war trumpets that made hoarse sounds.

F

BATTLE OF LAKE TRASIMENE, 217 BC

1: Caius Flaminius Nepos

The doomed consul's armour is described by Silius Italicus (*Punica*, VI, 132ff) in terms that accord with evidence from Etruscan urns of the period – an important source for the Punic Wars: 'His tough helmet was made of bronze and the tawny hide of a sea-calf; and above it rose a triple crest, with hair of the Suevi hanging down like a mane; and on the top stood a Scylla, brandishing a heavy broken oar and opening wide the savage jaws of her dogs. When Flaminius conquered and slew Gargenus, king of the Boii, he had fitted to his own head this famous trophy that no hand could mutilate, and proudly he bore it in all his battles. Then he put on his cuirass; its twisted hooks [i.e. the rings of mail] were decorated with plates wrought of hard steel mingled with gold. Next he took up his shield, formerly drenched from the slaughter of Gauls and adorned with their blood; and on it the She-wolf, in a dripping grotto, was licking the limbs of a child [i.e. the suckling of Romulus and Remus in Rome's foundation-myth] … Lastly he fitted the sword to his side and took the spear in his right hand. His warhorse stood by, proudly champing at the foaming bit; for saddle he bore the striped pelt of a Caucasian tiger'.

2: Insubrian chieftain

According to Livy's account, the northern Italic Celtic horseman who ran through and killed Flaminius Nepos was named Ducarius. We reconstruct him from the many sources for Celtic armour and weapons of the period, e.g. the 3rd-century mailshirt from Ciumesti, Romania and a statuette from northern Italy, and a sword and a shield from finds in Italic Celtic graves. Two size-groups of sword blades are often found in Celtic graves dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC, with lengths of 62–67cm (24.4–26.4in) and 68–81cm (26.8—31.9in) respectively. However, it is only from the Second Punic War, with the increased importance of Celtic cavalry, that we find two parallel series of swords consolidated in graves, one group specific to cavalrymen. In the 3rd century BC the use of 'chain' sword belts became generalized in the southern part of the Celtic world.

3: Roman *triarius*

Note his Etrusco-Corinthian helmet, and the Etruscan style of lamellar armour widely used by the Romans of this period.

4: Garamantian light infantryman

The long hair of noblemen of this Libyan people was ornamented with gold clasps (SI, II, 78); note too his typical loose tunic, and the red 'war-paint' on his face and limbs. The general use of javelins by the Libyan tribes is widely attested by the literary sources (e.g. SI, II, 124–125, 176). The weapons in his left hand are copied from specimens found at El-Soumaa; the *tragula* in his right hand, described by Silius Italicus (III, 318) as the typical weapon of the Garamantians, is from an Iberian specimen.

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Nudity was also characteristic of the Celts in battle, as at Cannae, where their lack of clothing or defensive body armour contrasted with the clothing of the Iberians. In other cases the Celts in battle are described as being dressed in a simple mantle, as visible on various Etruscan urns, in the frieze of Civitalba, and on a small bronze plaque. Descriptions in Gaelic and Latin poems include striped or fringed cloaks in deep red, purple or green; the *Aeneid* speaks of such a cloak as a *sagulum virgatum et lucens*.

The ancient authors commonly speak of the inferiority of Celtic weapons in battle by comparison with the Romans' more effective arms. This topic is visited at least four times by Polybius, and, for the period in which they served in the Carthaginian armies, by Livy, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and, as quoted before, Strabo. According to Polybius: 'The Gallic sword is less effective than Roman one because it can only hit by cutting and not [by stabbing], and because of this feature only its first blow is effective' (II, 30, 8); 'After the first blow, in fact, it bends and deforms, forcing the warrior to straighten it with his foot ... on the ground' (II, 33, 3); 'The sword of the Celts is without a sharp tip and thus can be only used for slashing' (II, 33, 5); and 'The Gallic sword is only effective for cutting actions and from a certain distance, while the Iberian, which is completely different, is strong in both thrusting and cutting and is very effective in close combat' (III, 114, 2–3).

However, in 367 BC (some 150 years earlier than the weapons described by Polybius) Celtic swords of the La Tène culture were certainly well made and did not suffer from the deficiencies he criticized. The context in which the weakness of Celtic swords was emphasized was the last quarter of the 3rd century BC (e.g. at Cannae, 216 BC). A laboratory analysis of iron/steel La Tène swords has shown these products of Celtic smiths to have a remarkable solidity, resistance and elasticity. However, other blades made of almost pure iron have poor mechanical strength and are easily deformable, thus apparently justifying Polybius's opinion.

During the 3rd century BC, Celtic weaponry underwent a series of transformations that saw both the evolution of existing items (sword blades, scabbards, shields, lances) and the appearance of new elements (e.g. chain belts), and in the final decades of the century equipment tended to became lighter. For instance, the chains of sword belts evolved into lighter, more comfortable flat-faced designs, and at the end of the century these disappeared, to be replaced by a type of leather belt formed of elements connected by massive rings and with a bronze terminal hook.

Ancient writers mention the Gaesati, a Celtic people who came to Italy from the Rhone valley and owed their name to a type of javelin called a *gaesum* (Verg., *Aen.* VIII, 661). At the battle of Lake Trasimene the Insubrian warrior Ducarius killed the Roman consul Flaminius Nepos with a *lancea*; Silius Italicus tells us (I, 318) that the *lancea* could also be thrown with the help of an *amentum*, a loop around the shaft. In Livy's words (XXII, 6, 4):

> The battle continued for nearly three hours, and in every quarter with fierceness; around the consul, however, it was still hotter and more determined. [He being] distinguished by his armour, the enemy attacked him with the utmost vigour, while his countrymen defended him; until an Insubrian horseman named Ducarius, who also knew his face…rushed through a very dense body of the enemy; and first slaying [the consul's] armour-bearer, who had opposed himself to [Ducarius] as he approached, he ran the consul through with his lance.

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The historical sources are unclear about the bow, though it was certainly used by the Celts. Archaeology tells us little, but it is worth mentioning a group of iron arrowheads from Tomb 135 of the necropolis at Monte Bibele, dated to the 3rd century BC.

The shield was fitted with a convex, slightly trapezoidal iron plate with ribs and fins fixed to the surface by large hemispherical hollow rivet-heads. Writing of Cannae, Polybius mentions a close similarity between the shields of Celtic and Celtiberian infantry as the only common element between the two units (III, 114, 2). This is also mentioned by Livy (XXII, 46, 5): 'The Gauls and the Spaniards had shields of almost the same shape'. He goes on to draw the familiar comparison between their weapons: 'Their swords were different in use and in appearance, those of the Gauls being very long and unpointed, while the Spaniards, who attacked as a rule more by thrusting than by slashing, had pointed ones that were short and handy'.

Inseparable from the consideration of Celtic weapons were their methods of applying 'psychological pressure' to strike terror into the enemy, like their matted, bristling hair coated with white gypsum plaster (SI, III, 541). Large numbers of horns and trumpets were also used to fill the air with an intimidating bellowing sound (Pol., II, 29, 6). We have some archaeological evidence for these instruments from later periods, as well as contemporary representations: the plate of the Gundestrup cauldron, Etruscan urns, and monumental Hellenistic and Roman reliefs such as the balustrade of the temple of Athena Nikephoros at Pergamum. In the absence of wind instruments, a terrifying noise could be achieved simply by striking the blades of swords against shields, accompanied by singing and wild screaming (Livy, XXXVIII, 17, 3–4; and, of Galician warriors, SI, III, 348).

A 3rd-century stele of the war-god Adad, riding with a standard of the sun disc and a hanging ribbon. This famous stele, preserved at the Museum of Carthage, shows Adad represented with a helmet surmounted by a plumed crest. The shape of this helmet is similar to the Italo-Celtic so-called 'Montefortino' type mainly used by Italic troops, but it also resembles older Assyrian helmets. (Drawing by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Charles-Picard 1958)

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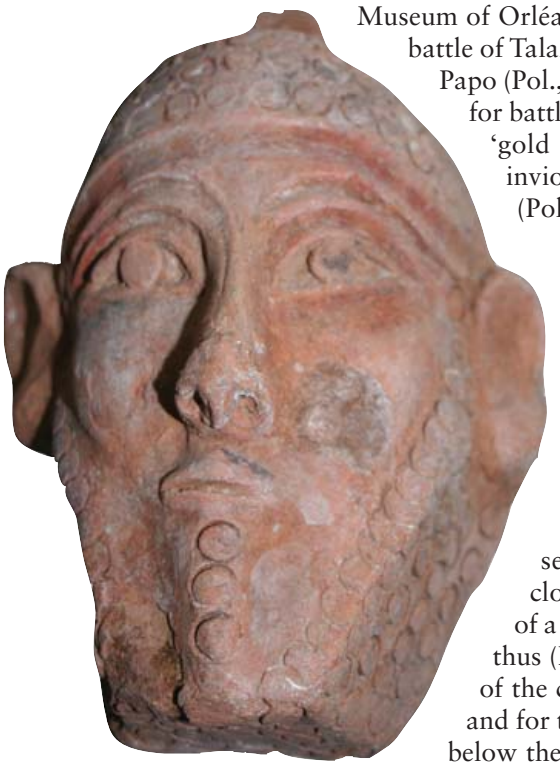
Insignia & standards

Another element related to the contingents of the Punic army was insignia. The standards of the Carthaginian army itself are well documented. That on the crude and incomplete 'stele of the Punic Mars' is a staff crowned by a crescent shape with the ends slightly turned out like horns, and with a separate short crossbar with attached dangling ribbons (see Plate H4). Babylonian and Assyrian armies had some sort of similar standards from which the Phoenicians had probably copied them. The standard represented on a stele of a warship from the *tophet* of Carthage shows the lunar crescent of the goddess Ishtar (Astarte) above the sun disc, mounted upon a staff and decorated with ribbons – common Punic religious symbolism. Many stelae from Carthage and other localities show various standards, although it is not always clear whether they are military or processional; these include a staff surmounted by two concentric rings (a symbol of the goddess Tanit, on a stele from Constantine, Algeria, now in the Louvre), and a crescent and disc without ribbons ('stele of the Mahout', from Carthage). The crescent was Syrio-Phoenician in origin and, along with the star and the disc, referred to the celestial world, the abode of the gods. With its limbs pointing downwards the crescent was often associated with a symbol of Tanit below it. The latter was made up of three parts: the base, forming a triangle or trapezium; above it a horizontal bar, whose ends in the great majority of cases are turned up more or less perpendicular to the bar; and a slightly flattened circle above the bar. According to Silius Italicus (II, 57; III, 382), the other African peoples also had their own standards.

The Celtic insignia were generally animal figures (especially the wild boar), and they are shown along with trophies of arms in various Greek-Roman monuments. Some specimens in bronze or brass sheet are preserved, e.g. the bronze wild boar head of Neuvy-en-Sullias now at the Museum of Orléans. Military standards taken from the Celts after the battle of Talamone were brought to the Capitol in Rome by Lucius Papo (Pol., II, 31, 6); and three years later the Insubres, preparing for battle against the Romans, took from the temple of Athena 'gold insignia considered immovable' (i.e. untouchable, inviolable and sacred) to guide and protect their warriors (Pol., II, 32, 6).



Male head or *protome* from Carthage, 6th century BC. The terracotta heads of the period offer a good idea of the appearance of Punic senior officers or civic dignitaries; note the curled beard recalling the Near Eastern tradition. A belief that supernatural power resided in the hair was typical of the Semitic peoples. (Photo courtesy Bardo Museum, Tunis)

CLOTHING & PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Together with original Phoenician fashions, Carthaginian costume was also influenced by both Egyptian and Greek styles. Hellenic influences never prevailed completely, however, although many aesthetic fashions and ethnic styles coexisted in this cosmopolitan trading city, with foreign tendencies being adapted to the local taste and needs.

In peacetime, and sometimes under armour, men seem to have dressed in traditional Near Eastern clothing: a long, one-piece tunic with long sleeves, often of a purple color. This garment was described by Tertullian thus (De Pallio, 3): '[They] were noteworthy for the quality of the cloth, for the magnificence and harmony of the dyes, and for the correct proportions. They did not extend in length below the calves, neither were they indecently short above the

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A Punic necklace of the 4th–3rd century BC, from Olbia; and enlarged details of three of the heads from it. The hair appears to be drawn up into a top-knot, recalling the pierced apex of the caps shown in earlier terracotta heads (though this detail may simply have been a practical way to hang the images on a cord). The ringlet-curled beards here are painted blue-black or red-brown. We can make out gold earrings, and the left and right heads in the enlarged photo also show gold-coloured spots between the brows. Earrings, necklaces and bracelets were worn by warriors as distinctive symbols of social status. (Photos courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

Votive stele from the *tophet* of Carthage, 3rd century BC. This represents a young warrior with curly hair but a clean-shaven face. Silius Italicus states (III, 234–235) that Carthage's national citizen warriors carried a simple shield *(parma)* and fought with a short sword. (Photo courtesy Museum of Carthage, Tunis)

knee. They were not short in the arms, nor narrow around the wrists… they hung upon the body in a balanced way, squared and comfortable.'

Punic warriors and hunters also employed the short tunic of the Greek hoplite, but their decoration followed the patterns that are still visible today on Carthaginian stelae: rosettes, astral symbols and floral motifs. Horse-breeders wore a tunic reinforced on the skirt by leather scales. Sometimes nobles wore garments similar to those of the late Egyptians, with fringed sashes wrapped around the skirt, and the head covered by metallic coifs. The Libyans often wore unbelted tunics, and Silius Italicus (II, 56) calls them 'loosely girt Libyans'. A military cloak similar to the Greek *hymation* was used by all soldiers, and those of commanders were often distinguished by embroidery in purple and gold (SI, I, 248; III, 238). According to Silius Italicus (III, 231–232), the people of Carthage were not tall: 'light of limb were they, and the glory of lofty stature was denied them'. The young

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warriors marched with bare feet and wore a red *discincta* ('unbelted') tunic, the colour chosen to hide bloodstains. This costume was similarly worn by many Libyans, such as the Adyrmachidae (see Plate H3).

As can be observed on many of the surviving terracotta facial masks, a nose-ring *(nezem)*, and the practice of cutting or tattooing the cheeks with religious symbols, were both characteristic of the Punics; graves in the Byzacena area also attest to the painting of red motifs on the arms and legs. The Massyli, like the Numidians and Gaetuli, wore their hair hanging down in close curls. Some child statuettes found in Punic sanctuaries show the boys with a central fore-and-aft crest of hair and an amulet hanging on the brow (see Plate H3); Herodotus describes this hairstyle as already characteristic of the Macae tribes in the 5th century BC.

Between 250 and 200 BC the Greek mode was prevailing to a greater extent, and stelae show young, clean-shaven warriors alongside the ever-present Carthaginian fashion for thick beards, rolled and curled in ringlets in the manner of their Phoenician ancestors.

3rd-century BC votive stelae from a *tophet*, now in the Museum of Carthage. The shape of Punic warships is well known from the stelae, and from coins minted under Hasdrubal Barca. The latter represent the prow of the admiral's war-galley, with shields attached to the sides and a three-horned *rostrum* or ramming beak, identical to actual specimens found in the western Mediterranean. Here, below a symbol of the goddess Tanit, the top image also shows a Punic standard of a crescent above a disc, with two hanging ribbons. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Mazza)

THE NAVY

The Carthaginian navy had a high reputation all over the Mediterranean. Even their enemies agreed on the strength and manoeuvrability of the Punic ships and the skill and experience of Carthage's expert shipwrights and sailors, who had inherited the arts of navigation from their Phoenician ancestors. The warship found in 1971 near Marsala (ancient Lilybaeum, in western Sicily) has revealed construction details that allow us to see how advanced Punic naval technology was during the 3rd century BC. If the Greeks were the first to increase the tonnage and power of warships by multiplying the banks of rowers, the Carthaginians (or Phoenicians) were perhaps the first to mass-produce hulls from pre-cut sections; the recovered timbers are marked with letters, to speed up the work of assembly. The Carthaginian navy was very similar to those of the Greek cities. Classical sources attribute to Carthage the invention of the quadrireme or *tetrērēs aro*und the 5th century BC, and of the quinquereme or *pentecontērēs*, the principal warship used in the wars against Rome. Polybius writes that in 256 BC Carthage had a war fleet of 350 'decked' ships.

The 'rudder' was the classical steering-oar, attached to the side of the stern with two hawsers, with a pole fixed at right angles to the oar's handle which the helmsman used as a tiller. Some steering-oars represented on stelae clearly show all these components. Normally the ship carried two steering-oars, port and starboard. Some naval experts suggest that only one would be used at a time while navigating, with the second being a spare in case of loss or damage to the first. The use of double helmsmen would demand much training and practice to achieve the necessary synchronization, and might have been employed only in exceptional circumstances; engravings of ships on stelae normally show a single steering-oar in use. However, Aelianus (IX, 40) writes that 'the Carthaginians appointed two pilots for every ship', which he argues was a mistake, saying that 'it was not fit that a ship should have two rudders'. He goes on to admit that in combat Punic ships used both 'rudders' simultaneously in order to tack more

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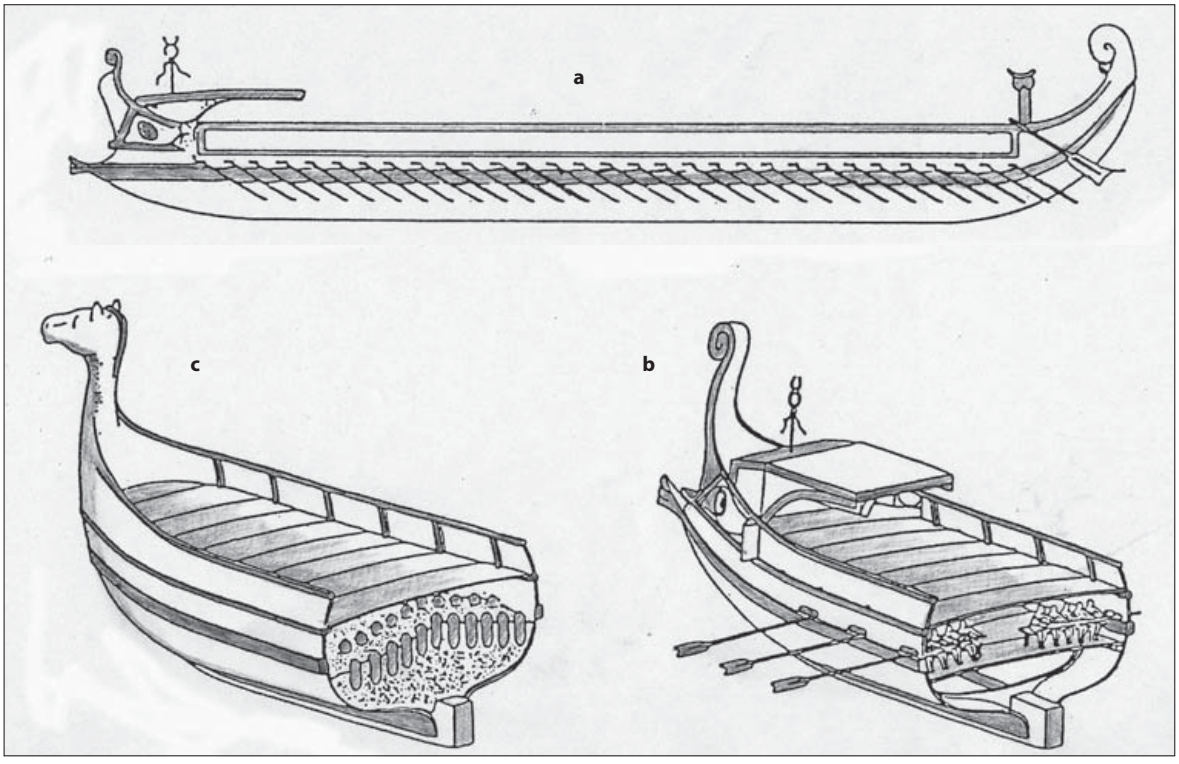
rapidly, and we know that the Carthaginians were considered masters in the tactics of naval skirmishing.

One representation of a heavy ship does seem to show a vertical rudder whose axis passes across the hull of the ship, in a very similar way to a modern rudder, but naval experts agree that a steering-oar is no less efficient; it allows smooth manoeuvring, and is fully compatible with vessels heavier than the warships of the period. Polybius (I, 51) gives us the best description of the Carthaginian ships and of their tactics:

> They much surpassed the Romans in speed, owing to the superior build of their ships and the better training of the rowers, as they had freely developed their line [formation?] in the open sea. For if any ships found themselves hard pressed by the enemy it was easy for them, owing to their speed, to retreat safely to open water and from thence, fetching round on the ships that pursued ... them, they either got in their rear or attacked them in the flank. As the enemy then had to turn round they found themselves in difficulty owing to the weight of the hulls and the poor oarsmanship of the crews, [so the Carthaginians] rammed them repeatedly and sunk many. Again, if any other of their own ships were in peril they were ready to render assistance with perfect security to themselves, as they were out of immediate danger and could sail in open water past the sterns of their own line.

Between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, Carthage offered to its visitors spacious harbours: a rectangular artificial basin *(cothon)* for merchant shipping, and a circular basin for warships, linked by a channel. According to Chateaubriand, who was the first to discover it, the circular harbour also



Reconstructions of a Carthaginian warship (a & b) and of a cargo ship (c). For centuries the Mediterranean peoples mainly used these two kinds of ships: the long warship powered mainly by oars, and a broader-beamed sailing vessel for transporting bulk cargoes. The Phoenicians called this latter vessel a *gauloi*; it was powered only by a large rectangular sail rigged from a yardarm attached across the mainmast. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Bartoloni)

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A 5th-century seal with the image of a warrior, from Tharros, Sardinia. The representation of a Greek mercenary on this seal, 1.4cm (0.55in) in diameter, shows him simply armed with his *hôplon* shield and a short javelin, and dressed only in a short cloak or *ephaptis*. (Photo courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari)

communicated with the sea through a second artificial channel, still visible in 1807. In the centre of this military harbour was what is called today 'the admiral's island', a round island linked to the shore by a causeway. Appian explained that this harbour had an entrance 21m (69ft) wide, and was enclosed by high stone embankments; these surrounding structures and the central island all incorporated roofed ship-sheds (like 'U-boat pens') for 220 war vessels, above which were storage magazines for their tackle and

G

BATTLE OF MYLAE, 260 BC

1: Carthaginian naval officer

Silius Italicus mentions the presence among the Carthaginians of contingents of Phoenician archers from Tyre (VII, 534ss), whose officers were splendidly equipped: they wore gilded helmets decorated with pearls, and purple mantles sewn with jewels, against which background their bronze armour glittered the more brightly. This passage is not only indicative of the links still existing between Carthage and its homeland, but is also important for its emphasis on the richness of the accoutrements of the Punic aristocracy of that age. Here the gilt helmet rises to the high crest described by Silius Italicus for the helmets of Sidon (XVI, 431). His rich mantle of the true Phoenician purple has the gold border described by Ovid (*Metamorphosis*, V), embroidered with the astral signs of the sun disc, crescent moon and stars. In accordance with a later description by Tertullian (*De Pallio*, I), it is worn here in the Punic manner, i.e. fastened at the neck, and attached to the shoulders by *fibulae* brooches so that it falls evenly on both sides.

2: Carthaginian marines

These sea-soldiers are lightly equipped, and only some of them wear a linen cuirass. The officer wears a lion-skin with the head over his helmet, as shown on votive razors and on statues of Herakles found in Carthaginian locations. Note too, visible below figure G1's bow-arm, a tattooed symbol of the goddess Tanit on the bicep of the man wearing the striped cap.

3: Roman boarding party

In 260 BC the Romans decided to create a war fleet with crews composed mainly of Greek and Etruscan marines who were incorporated into the legions. The *milites* are represented here with their characteristic appearance, mainly based on the evidence of Etruscan urns. To counter the superior ability of the Punic sailors in manoeuvring their vessels, the consul Duilius proposed simple but effective tactics – though inelegant, and unworthy of 'real sailors'. The Romans would lay their vessel alongside a Punic ship, and then drop a spiked 'raven' or boarding-bridge onto its deck; this held the ships together, and turned the battle into the sort of infantry combat with which the Romans were confidently familiar.

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equipment. Two Ionic columns flanked the entrance to each shed, giving the appearance of continuous porticoes around both the outside of the harbour and the circumference of the island. High above the 30 ship-pens on the island rose the admiral's house, from which trumpets gave signals, heralds carried orders, and the admiral overlooked everything. Recent archaeological excavations have confirmed Appian's data. They have also located the *choma* described by the Greek historian, a kind of boarding-place for infantry and chariots.

The city, which stood at the head of a roughly hammer-shaped promontory or isthmus, was also protected by a triple wall on the land side and a single wall round the seafront. Inside the walls were stables for 300 war-elephants and 4,000 horses, and barracks capable of housing 24,000 men.

SELECTED CAMPAIGNS & BATTLES

THE CONQUEST OF SARDINIA, 545–*c.*509 BC

The presence of Phoenician colonists on the island before the mid-6th-century Carthaginian military expedition is well attested. Though the literary sources speak of a consolidation of positions inland and the military establishment of colonial rule after the battle of Alalia (535 BC), the archaeology shows a more ancient Punic presence along the south-western coast, and the establishment of the first urban settlements at least a century before the 540s. In the coastal and sub-coastal areas we find, from south to north, important remains of fortifications and houses on Monte Nai and Cala Sinzias, and, in the area of Colostrai, the remains of Punic settlements, pottery, and a 2m (6ft 6in) high granite stele bearing two inscribed Punic characters. The remains of a fort or temple were found at Santa Maria di Villaputzu, surrounded by smaller buildings and abundant Punic ceramic finds. A military penetration is clearly attested from the excavations at Monte Sirai.

The first reliable written information comes from the historian Justin, who describes a military expedition to the island led by the general Mazheus in the mid-6th century BC following his successful campaigning in Sicily. In Sardinia, however, Mazheus was defeated and lost most of his army; wide-ranging studies of parallel events (such as the exploits of Cyrus in Persia) allow historians to fix the chronology of the expedition to between 545 and 535 BC. In these years the Persians had completed the conquest of the Lydian kingdom of Sardis, original homeland of the Sardinians. If we consider that in about 565 BC the Greeks founded Alalia on the coast of Corsica, and that around 535 BC an alliance of the Etruscans and Carthaginians was defeated by the Phocean Greeks in a sea battle in that area, it seems plausible that Mazheus's expedition had the purpose of confronting a Greek attempt to counterbalance an increasing Carthaginian presence in Sardinia. But who defeated Mazheus?

One possibility considered by scholars was an alliance between the existing Phoenician settlements and the indigenous peoples of Sardinia (Sardia), both trying to defend their independence. However, the whole history of relations between Carthage and the Phoenician colonies shows alliance rather than hostility, and it would be far more natural for the native populations of a Sardinia that was not yet under Carthaginian control to

OPPOSITE This extraordinary helmet of Attic typology dates from the 3rd century BC; found in an unknown Italian location, it is now in the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco in the Vatican. This elaborately decorated piece, 20cm (7.9in) high, belongs to the group of Hellenic styles of helmet used by Greek, Italic and Carthaginian armies during the Punic Wars, in which it was certainly employed. (Author's collection)

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react to a deep military penetration of their island. An important archaeological discovery has cast light on these events. In 1975 a Nuragic sanctuary was discovered on Monte Prama that contained giant statues of warriors equipped in the Sardian manner. According to the recent interpretation by Pittau, this *heroon* was constructed in around the mid-6th century BC to celebrate a great victory achieved by the Nuragic warriors over Mazheus's army in response to this first attempt to impose Punic hegemony over the island. The battle was probably fought nearby, around Oristano or the Sinis isthmus, and the temple ascribed the victory to the main Sardian divinity, the '*Sardus Pater*'. Pausanias (X, 17, 1; 18, 1) wrote that the western Sardoi sent a bronze statue of their god to Delphi, probably on the occasion of this victory over the Carthaginian common enemy

If the sources are silent about events before Mazheus's expedition, they are slightly more forthcoming about those that followed. Some years later the Carthaginians began a focused programme of renewed conquest; although these expeditions clearly achieved success, the sources give few details of victories or of the duration of the campaigns. According to the scholars Pais and Lilliu, the actual start of Punic rule over Sardinia as a whole may be fixed at some time pre-dating the first trade treaty between Carthage and Rome,

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traditionally dated to 509 BC. This treaty prohibited Roman navigation to the west of Cape Fair; allowed free trade in Carthaginian Sicily and Sardinia; and, with reference to Libya, provided that 'those [Romans] who are coming for commercial purposes cannot conclude any business except in the presence of a Carthaginian herald or scribe'. The fact that the Carthaginian state was the guarantor of commercial transactions agreed in the presence of its officials makes it clear that Sardinia and Libya were both by then under a substantial degree of control by Carthage, and that this position was recognized by international treaty.

Polybius also comments on the provisions of the treaty concerning Sardinia and Libya, stating that the Carthaginians considered these areas to be their own property. However, the situation in 509 BC was not yet that of 348 BC, when a second treaty was concluded between Carthage and Rome. Again according to Polybius, under the provisions of the 348 treaty 'No Roman shall make trade or found a city in Sardinia and Libya.' Although the sources for the Carthaginian conquest of Sardinia are limited, it therefore seems reasonable to conclude that Punic control was not significant before about 540 BC; that it had been established by 509 BC; and that it became increasingly secure during the two centuries that followed. Diodorus Siculus relates that the Carthaginians' determination to become the overlords of Sardinia led to many wars; but he adds, interestingly, that although they conquered the island they never managed to completely enslave its people:

> The Carthaginians at the time of their greater power took over the island, but they could not reduce to slavery those who occupied it before them. The Iolei took refuge in the mountainous region, digging underground dwellings and focusing on the breeding of

H

HANNIBAL BARCA BEFORE ZAMA, 202 BC

1a & 1b: Hannibal Barca and his shield-bearer

The equipment of the great Carthaginian leader (by this date, one-eyed) is reconstructed according to the sources, and what was believed to be a portrait once preserved in the Naples Museum, augmented with archaeological evidence from his period. Note the red crest (SI, XVII) and white plumes of his helmet (SI, II, 397–399). His purple tunic is embroidered in gold thread with typical motifs – stars, crescents, leaves and palmettes. His gilded ringmail armour is described (SI, II, 401–404) as an Iberian gift: 'a cuirass wrought with triple layers of golden rings, a defence that no weapon could pierce, wrought throughout of bronze and tough steel, and covered richly with gold from the Tagus river'. His shield-bearer carries his iron-headed javelins, and the polished shield carefully described in *Punica* (SI, I, 466–467); the club of Herakles-Melqart, represented on coins of the Barcids and here embossed horizontally across the shield, was probably the family blazon. Note the Campanian armour of the shield-bearer, copied from the original specimen found in the Punic grave at Ksour-es-Saf.

2: Puno-Libyan *doryphoros*

This veteran spearman is from Gibraltar (Latin, Hercules Galpes). His lavish shield is decorated with a Gorgon's mask set against an *aegis* of scales, as represented on the Chemtou frieze. This shield for a Gibraltan soldier was also described by Silius Italicus as made of elephant-hide over a wooden core, with bronze fittings and decorations and gilded scales. On the man's face are traces of ritual scarification, and, though hardly noticeable here, his arms and legs are covered with patterns painted in red *(fard)*, as found on Punic male skeletons in a Libyan necropolis in the Byzacena area. The design of his conical bronze helmet follows the El-Soumaa specimen, and his red-painted linen armour of Hellenic type is from the Simitthus/Chemtou monument.

3: Adyrmachid warrior

The Libyan tribe called the Adyrmachidae by ancient writers are described as bearing a buckler *(caetra)* of many colours and a sword fashioned 'in the shape of a sickle' *(ensis falcatus)*, and wearing a single greave on the left leg (SI, III, 278–280). This warrior has his head shaved except for a central plaited crest, with a crescent amulet fastened to hang on his brow; interestingly, this hairstyle is still visible on a Libyan stele of the 2nd century AD. Note the nose-ring *(nezem)* that was typical of the Punic culture.

4: Standard-bearer, Carthaginian citizen cavalry

The standard itself is copied from the 'stele of the Punic Mars'. Note his Montefortino-style bronze helmet, with the white crest described by Silius Italicus for Carthaginian officers. Livy mentions Carthaginian national cavalry equipped with helmet, cuirass, shield, spear and sword; and he tells us that in his harangue to his army before the battle of Ticinus, Hannibal distinguished between the cavalry using the bridle and bit and the Numidian horsemen who rode without harness.

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numerous flocks... Although they have often been attacked by the Carthaginians with impressive forces, they fled to avoid slavery, protected by the difficult access of their country and by their underground dwellings.

THE BATTLE OF HIMERA, 480 BC

In 480 BC one of the bloodiest battles of the ancient world was fought near the Sicilian city of Himera, between the Syracusan Greeks and the Carthaginians. Writers of the time interpreted events as a surge of Greek resistance against the joint aggression of Persian and Phoenician 'barbarians'; Herodotus tells us that the battle was fought on the same day as the battle of Salamis, Diodorus that it coincided with that of Thermopylae. Modern scholars reject any interpretation of this coincidence as evidence of a coordinated Persian-Phoenician strategy, although the fact that the Greeks were facing the Persian invasion may have led the Carthaginians to implement their long-considered project of an invasion of Sicily.

A strong Punic army under the command of Hamilcar the Magonid (a reference to his aristocratic clan) invaded the island, landing at Panormus with, according to sources, a frankly incredible alleged strength of 300,000 men; however, a disaster at sea during the voyage to Sicily had cost him most of his cavalry. As was traditional, the Carthaginian army was composed mainly of mercenaries: not only Libyans, Iberians and Ligurians, but also Corsicans, and fierce Nuragic warriors from Sardinia.

While Theron of Akragas (today, Agrigento) held the city of Himera against the immediate Carthaginian siege, Gelon of Syracuse marched to his aid with a strong force. Hamilcar had camped to the west of the town, leaving his ships beached in the mouth of the river that watered Himera. His army ravaged the surrounding area, and Himera was blockaded from both land and sea. Theron then launched a sortie to prevent the completion of the Punic ditch and palisade protecting the invaders' ships; at first successful, this attempt was met with a counter-attack, and the hoplites of Akragas and Himera were forced back into the city.

When Gelon came up with a Syracusan army of 24,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, he chose to camp to the south-east of the city, in terrain where he could use his cavalry en masse to exploit Hamilcar's lack of horse. A battle was fought on the slopes of Mt Eurako (today, Mt St Calogero) when Carthaginian mercenaries were caught by the Syracusan cavalry while they were out raiding, and were slaughtered or taken prisoner. By another stroke of luck for the Greeks, Gelon intercepted a message from Hamilcar in which he asked Selinunte, a city allied to Carthage, to send him a contingent of cavalry. On one of the following days Hamilcar the Magonid intended to make a great sacrifice to Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, and early in the morning he appeared before the ships dressed in ceremonial robes to officiate over a mass sacrifice of animals. At this point the Tyrant of Syracuse sent his cavalry along the shore, and when they came into view Punic sentries mistook them for the expected reinforcements from Selinunte. The Syracusan horsemen set fire to the Punic ships, and then turned at once on the Carthaginian camp, which was in total chaos. Hoplites came up in support, and together the heavy Greek phalanx and horsemen tore the resistance of the Carthaginian mercenaries to pieces. Overwhelmingly defeated, Hamilcar chose (according to Herodotus) to kill

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himself by fire; according to other authors, he died accidentally among the blazing Punic ships. (Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that even several years after the battle the Carthaginians still considered this Hamilcar the Magonid as a hero, going so far as to erect monuments and altars to his memory both in the homeland and in the colonies.) The number of Punic prisoners reported in the sources was so high that in following years it was claimed that there were about 500 slaves for every citizen of Akragas. The Syracusans celebrated the victory by coining a new currency, the *demareteion*, and by building – with the labour of their prisoners – a magnificent Doric temple complex to the gods of victory, of which the remains may still be seen today.

Carthage had suffered a severe blow. It had lost its powerful fleet – partly burned, and partly sunk in a storm that struck the surviving vessels on their way home – and no longer had any mercenary army to speak of. The failed invasion had been such a disaster that the Carthaginian rulers, fearing that the Greeks would sail to mount an assault on their own city, sent ambassadors to Gelon to sue for peace. His terms were honourable, but included a large money indemnity, and for 70 years thereafter no Punic army set foot on Sicilian soil.

As is traditional, the ancient sources claim that improbably huge numbers of Carthaginians fell during the battle. Nevertheless, work on a railway linking Fiumetorto and Ogliastrillo has unearthed on the plain of Buonfornello, not far from Termini Imerese, finds that have been described by experts as the largest necropolis ever discovered in *Magna Graecia*. More than 500 burials have already been identified, but a survey estimates a total of about 12,000 graves dating from the 5th to 6th centuries BC. Future anthropological study of the skeletons promises to yield valuable information about their lives – such as their diets and diseases – and especially about violent deaths. Among them there are collective burials that may be considered as real mass graves, presumably linked to the two great battles of Himera fought between Greeks and Carthaginians in 480 and 409 BC in the area of the present necropolis.

THE MERCENARY REVOLT, 240 BC

Immediately following the First Punic War, Carthage found itself facing a serious threat of overthrow from within. More than 20 years of war had exhausted even this city's vast wealth, and the Punic state was unable to honour the contracts of its numerous hired soldiers.

As soon as peace with the Romans was signed, Gesco, governor of Lilybaeum in western Sicily, had begun sending the mercenaries back to Carthage in small detachments in the hope that as they arrived they would be paid off and dismissed, but the city was soon full of angry unpaid warriors. After a while, to avoid the spread of disorder to the local mob, they were collected together in a camp outside the walls and left there waiting for the unpredictable payment of their wages. When the ruling oligarchs learned that these furious soldiers had produced some formidable leaders to speak for them, part of the money owed was sent, but it came too late: the mercenaries were in a mood to plunder the city of all its riches. Two of their leaders stood out among the others: Spendius, a runaway slave from Campania, a man of enormous strength and bravery; and a free-born African named Matho, who found his fellow Africans ready to follow him.

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Shield carved on the 2nd-century BC Numidian monument at Chemtou, with a blazon representing Athena's *aegis* with a Gorgon's head in the centre; see Plate H2. (Photo courtesy Chemtou Archaeological Museum/ Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Rom, Chimtou-Archiv)

Gesco, who had been sent to negotiate with the troops, handed over the arrears of actual pay, but postponed the question of the allowances owed for their supplies. Loud cries of discontent were followed by a gathering of the malcontents, the killing of opponents, and the election of Spendius and Matho as commanders of the rebels. Gesco and his staff were seized and held hostage. Most of the North African towns, discontented with their Punic masters, joined the mercenaries (with the exception of Hippo and Utica), and many Libyan slaves increased the mutineers' numbers. During the expensive war against Rome the oligarchy of Carthage had been obliged to increase the taxes on their subjects and dependencies. Tributes in kind from the cultivators of the soil and taxes on the cities had both been doubled, and any default in payment had been cruelly punished. Now women from all the towns brought their jewellery and threw it into the common treasury of the rebellion. Spendius and Matho found themselves with funds sufficient to settle all the claims of the troops, while leaving a substantial war chest to finance continued operations.

Utica and the Macar river

The mutineers divided their forces into three parts, and two of these immediately besieged the loyalist towns of Hippo and Utica. The third division held an entrenched camp at Tunis, cutting off Carthage from all land communication. The Carthaginian commander-in-chief Hanno marched against the rebel force at Utica with a powerful army including 100 elephants. With these he broke through the rebels' entrenchments, and the mercenaries fled in panic. Hanno was accustomed to dealing with half-savage enemies who, once defeated, could not easily be rallied, and he believed that his victory was final. He and his soldiers became careless, and amused themselves in Utica; but the mercenaries were seasoned professional soldiers, accustomed to rallying and regrouping after a setback. Seeing that the Carthaginian camp was left largely unguarded, they attacked it, and

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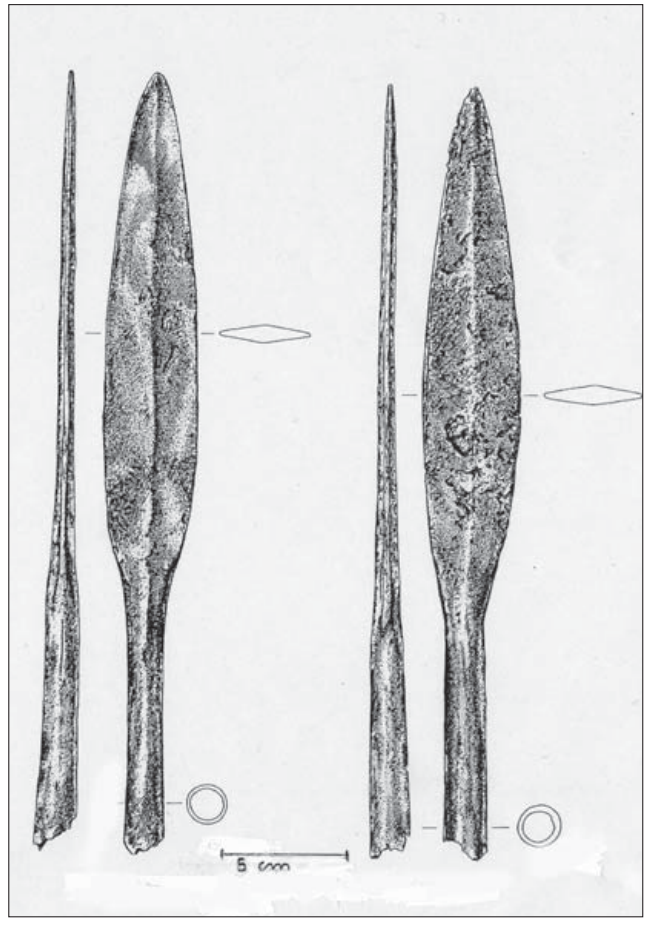
took possession of a great quantity of supplies and even some artillery that Hanno had brought out of the city.

Hanno's political opponent Hamilcar Barca, just back from the war against the Romans, now took command of a Punic army consisting of 10,000 native Carthaginians, a force of selected loyalist mercenaries, and 70 elephants. To relieve Utica he needed first to break the blockade that Matho had established around Carthage. The hills at the land end of the isthmus on which the city stood were held by the enemy, and the only practical approach was by a bridge over the Macar river. Hamilcar took advantage of a wind that drove up quantities of sand on a bar in the Macar and made it easily fordable. He pushed his army across the river by night, and, appearing on the other side the next morning, he hastened to attack the rear of the mutineers who were guarding the bridge. The rebel besiegers of Utica sent a strong force to help their comrades. Hamilcar marched with his elephants in front, his lightly armed troops behind them and his heavily armed troops in the rear, but on coming in sight of the enemy he ordered changes to these dispositions. Spendius mistook the signs of movement for a flight and ordered a charge, which struck Hamilcar's heavy infantry, but his cavalry and the elephants fell upon the flanks of the mercenaries: 6,000 rebels were slaughtered on the battlefield, and 2,000 taken prisoner. Hamilcar Barca had broken the blockade of Carthage; but Hippo and Utica were still under siege, and the rebels were well established at Tunis.

Naravas, a leading Numidian prince, now joined the Carthaginians with a force of 2,000 men, and Hamilcar then felt himself strong enough to offer battle. A bloody onslaught followed, in which the Carthaginians eventually prevailed, chiefly thanks to their elephants. The rebels lost 10,000 men fallen, and 4,000 were taken prisoner. To these latter Hamilcar wisely offered two choices: to take service with Carthage once again, or to go home – but if they chose the latter option and were ever found in arms again, they would be shown no mercy.

Dismayed by this unexpected threat to the cohesion of the mutineers, the rebel leaders called an assembly of their soldiers, and brought in a courier who professed to come with a dispatch from the rebels in Sardinia. This warned that a plot was being hatched in the camp for setting free Gesco and the other Carthaginian prisoners. Spendius and Antaritus – a Gallic mercenary who had shared the command with Spendius and Matho, and was able to speak the Carthaginian language – told their soldiers that it was madness to think of concluding peace with Hamilcar and Carthage, and to forestall the alleged plot to free them the decision



2nd-century BC spearheads with leaf-shaped blades from El-Soumaa, now in the museum at Constantine, Algeria. Similar spearheads for weapons of various sizes were found at this site. (Drawings by Andrea Salimbeti, ex Ulbert)

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was taken to put the captives to death. Gesco and his 700 comrades were cruelly murdered, and from that time on no mercy would be shown by either side.

Divided command and Roman interference

The division of Carthaginian command between Hamilcar Barca and Hanno, who could not agree, did great damage. Moreover, Sardinia was lost to Carthage, and now the townspeople of Utica and Hippo both joined the rebellion, massacring their besieged Carthaginian garrisons. However, the oligarchy now received indirect support from unexpected quarters. Hiero, the Tyrant of Syracuse, did not want a situation in which Rome was left unchallenged by a powerful rival. Rome itself, still governed by the patrician class, did not relish the example of another oligarchy being torn down by popular uprisings. Consequently, the Romans chose not to take (immediate) possession of Sardinia, nor of Utica, both of which were offered to them by the rebels; they also allowed traders to send supplies into Carthage, but not to the rebels.

The mercenaries outside Carthage were in their turn encircled by Naravas, whose Numidian cavalry cut their supply lines from the surrounding country. This strategy implemented by Hamilcar Barca reduced at least part of his enemies to the most frightful extremities; the rebels who were trapped in the so-called 'Canyon of the Axe' (today identified as the Canyon of the Saw, probably located around Mt Zaghoua near Tunis) were forced to resort to cannibalism. The leader Spendius and his comrades accepted terms: the rebels were allowed to go free, with the exception of ten chosen by name – obviously, Spendius and Antaritus were two of them.

Hamilcar then moved with his army against the remaining rebels encamped at Tunis.He positioned himself on one side of the battle array, leaving command of the other flank in the hands of a deputy named Hannibal (not to be confused with Hamilcar's son, Hannibal Barca). Spendius and the other nine prisoners were crucified in front of the rebels' walls to demonstrate the cost of stubborn resistance. However, Hannibal incompetently lost his wing of the army to Matho, who stormed the Punic camp, and Hannibal was crucified alive on the same cross on which the body of Spendius was still hanging.

By this point all the Carthaginians understood the necessity of putting aside their internal quarrels and bringing the war to an end. Hamilcar Barca and Hanno agreed to act in harmony; a general levy was raised, and every Carthaginian citizen who was of an age to bear arms was compelled to serve. In 238 BC Matho was finally forced to accept battle, was defeated, and taken prisoner. All the North African towns, including Utica and Hippo, once again submitted to Carthaginian rule. According to Polybius, 'such was the conclusion of the war between Carthaginians and their mercenaries, after a continuance of three years and about four months: a war by far the most impious and bloody of any that we find in history.'

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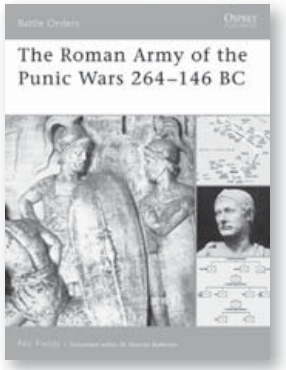

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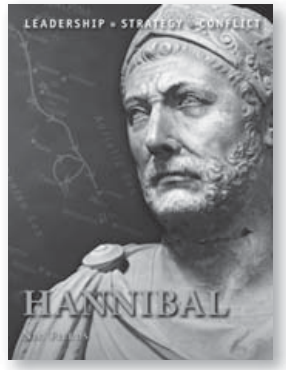

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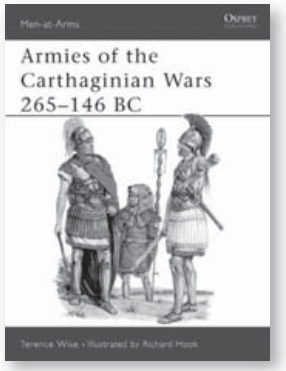

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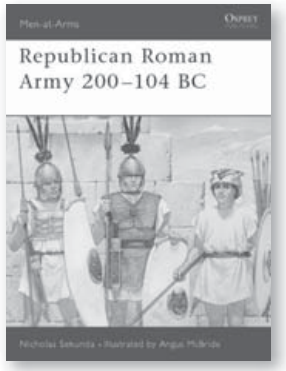

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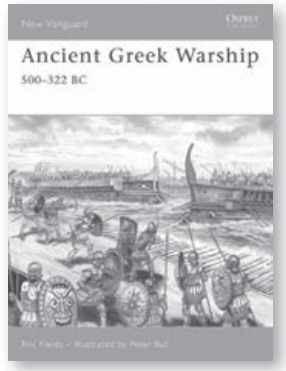

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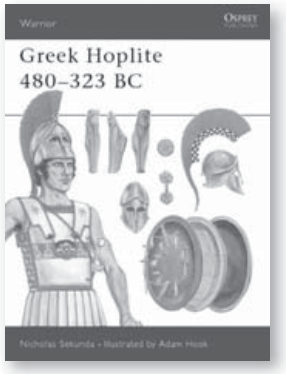

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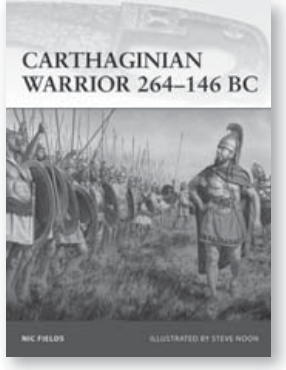

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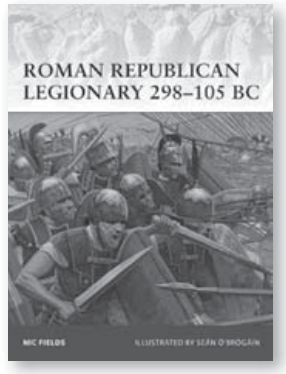

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DEDICATION

To Meron Bedewi, flower of Africa

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ARTIST'S NOTE

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